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The Harleian MS 7334

of

Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.

THE
HARLEIAN MS 7334
OF
CHAUCER'S CANTEBURY TALES.

EDITED BY
FREDERICK J. FURNIVALL.

410¹¹
98

LONDON:
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TO
The Lovers of Chaucer,
PAST, PRESENT,
AND
TO COME.

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no. 73

First Series,
LXXIII.

R. Clay and Sons, Bungay, Suffolk.

FOREWORDS.

WHEN thinking in 1868 what were the six best MSS of the Canterbury Tales to print in my *Six-Text* for the Chaucer Society, the Harleian 7334 was of course one of the first that occurred to me. But as it had been printed twice by the late Thomas Wright—in 3 vols. for the Percy Society, and then in cheap double-column,—then by Mr. Jephson for the late Robert Bell's Series of English Poets (published by Jn. Wm. Parker), and a fourth time by my friend Dr. Richard Morris for George Bell's Aldine Series,¹ I decided to let these four printings suffice for the Harleian 7334, and so get a fresh MS (which proved to be of the B-type) into print among my Six. It was not a wise decision, as there are too many of the Corpus or B-type already in the Six-Text, and I have unluckily filled up gaps in the better A-type MSS—Ellesmere, Hengwrt, and Cambridge—with extracts from B-type ones, though in several cases the Christchurch A-type MS was open to me. But when I started Chaucer work, I didn't know even the little that the course of it has taught me. (Still, as investigation of the niceties of Early English goes on, probably no student will blame me for having printed one more MS of *The Canterbury Tales*. And though collators' curses for the amount of labour I've thrown on them have already fallen thickly upon me, I always assure these Balaams that they'll bless me when their work is done.)

¹ Mr. George Bell meant at first simply to reprint Pickering's text of Chaucer's Poetical Works, but, on my strong remonstrance as to its badness, Mr. Bell agreed to engage Dr. Morris to re-edit the whole from MSS.

Well, when Editors began to edit Chaucer's Tales, and wanted to know what the reading of Harleian 7334 is, they often found some italics in Dr. Morris's text, showing that he'd altered his MS; and as his publisher wouldn't let him give various readings, a reference to the MS became necessary. This was a great bore, specially when a man lived in Germany or America. Moreover, my friend Prof. Child meant his foundation-Essay on Chaucer's language and metre to be based on the MS Harl. 7334, and not on any Editor's changes of it, whether right or wrong. So it gradually became plain that a simple print of this MS must be done for the Chaucer Society. And here accordingly it is. It is as accurate as twice reading of every line with the MS by me can make it; but no doubt little slips have happened; they always will befall.

The MS is dear to the soul of HENRY BRADSHAW and all concerned in the due order of the Canterbury Tales, because it has, at the end of the First Fragment of Group B—the Man of Law's Tale—the proper Man-of-Law-Shipman Link, which should hook it on to the Second Fragment that the Shipman's Tale heads. No Shipman's Tale and Fragment 2 however follow it—but instead, Group D,—Wife, Friar, Summoner,—then Groups E, F, G, C,—and after these, the wanting Second Fragment of B, though without its genuine End-Link.

The MS is of an independent type, not falling into either the edited A-type or the inferior B-type to which the Corpus, Petworth, and Lansdowne belong, in the main. It is perhaps, by a few years, the oldest extant MS of the Tales, and contains an excellent text, tho' its occasional plurals in *us* and its past tenses and participles in *ud*, together with its loss of 608 lines out of Group F (lines 617—1223, or 8 leaves¹ of the MS from l. 271 of the Squire's Tale, all the Squire-Miller Link, and then lines

¹ The MS has thirty-eight lines to a page, or 608 lines in the 16 pages.

1—487 of the Franklin's Tale, p. 354-5 below, Harl. paging), render it less fitted for the basis of a complete edition of *The Canterbury Tales* than the fine illuminated Ellesmere MS.¹ Moreover, Harl. 7334 sticks 8 spurious lines—2004 b, c; 2012 b, c; 2037 b, c; 2048 b, c,—p. $\frac{393}{53}-4$, into the Summoner's Tale, and one, l. 592 (p. $\frac{425}{53}$) into the Squire's Tale. It also has not 2 lines, A 252 b, c, in the General Prolog, p. 8; 2 in the Cook's Tale, A 4375-6, p. 127; and 8 at the end of the Cook's Tale, A 4415—4422, p. 128; 7 lines in the Knight's Tale, A 2013-18, p. 58, A 2958, p. 84; 2 lines in the Miller's Tale, A 3721-2, p. 106; 2 in the Reeve-Cook Link (A 4355, 4358, p. 125-6; 4 lines altered into two); one line in the Man of Law's Tale, B 417, p. $\frac{143}{69}$, and five at the end of the Man of Law's End-Link, B 1186—1190, p. $\frac{167}{93}$; thirty lines in the Wife's Preamble, D 575—584, 605—612, 619—626, 717—720, p. $\frac{350}{10}-\frac{351}{11}$, $\frac{354}{14}$; eight in the Second Nun's Tale, G 155, 210—216, p. $\frac{532}{72}$, $\frac{534}{74}$; the 8 genuine Ellesmere lines² in the Franklin's Tale, 1455-6, 1493-8, p. $\frac{521}{61}-3$, besides leaving out 2 lines (2356-7, p. $\frac{474}{33}$) in the Merchant's Tale,³ four (299-300, 305-6, p. $\frac{312}{42}$) in the Doctor-Pardoner Link, two in the Pardoner's Tale, C 478-9 (p. $\frac{318}{38}$); five in the Shipman's Tale, B 1355 (p. $\frac{172}{49}$) and B 1376-9 (p. $\frac{173}{45}$); one in Sir Thopas, B 1995 (p. $\frac{194}{71}$); about a dozen of prose (trebles) in Melibe,⁴ one stanza of 8 in the Monk's Tale, B 3213-20 (p. $\frac{257}{34}$), four lines in the Nun's Priest's Tale, 4136-7 (p. $\frac{256}{53}$), 4478-9 (p. $\frac{296}{73}$), and all its End Link, 16 lines, (for which see p. 694,) and about 23 treble ones in the Parson's Tale: see the gaps in pages $\frac{593}{99}-\frac{684}{90}$ as you

¹ The Ellesmere has not the Man-of-Law-Shipman Link which Harl. 7334 has.

² No other MS yet examined by me has these 8 lines.

³ Lines like these, due to the scribe's jumping from one 'sight' to the other, might well have been dotted differently in the print, so as to show the jump.

⁴ B 2252-3 (p. $\frac{208}{65}$), 2264 (p. $\frac{209}{80}$), 2432, 2444 (p. $\frac{219}{96}-2$), 2623-4 (p. $\frac{229}{67}$), part of 2646-7 (p. $\frac{231}{88}$), 2708 (p. $\frac{234}{11}$), part of 2726, 2730, 2741 (p. $\frac{234}{12}-\frac{6}{13}$), part of 2854 ($\frac{242}{12}$), 3034 (p. $\frac{249}{27}$).

turn over the leaves. Altogether, at least, 760 lines are wanting in Harl. 7334 : a serious loss.¹ But on the other hand, this Harl. 7334 puts lines 1307-8 of Group D, the Friar's Tale, in their right place, on p. $\frac{372}{33}$ instead of their wrong one as lines 1293-5 of the Wife-Friar Link, on p. $\frac{371}{31}$.

That in some cases the Harl. readings are not so good as those of the Ellesmere, I showed in my article 'Recent² Work at Chaucer' in *Macmillan's Magazine* for March 1874 ; but I admitted that in other instances the Harleian readings were the better. Of the MSS which contain the spurious 'Tale of Gamelyn'—the A-type ones don't—Prof. Skeat found Harl. 7334 much the best. See his 1s. 6d. edition of *Gamelyn* for the Clarendon Press.

I once hoped to have edited the *Tales* and all Chaucer either with Mr. Bradshaw or alone ; but alas, what with the Philological Soc., and occasional work for its Dictionary, Early English Texts and Wyclif, Shakspeare and his Quartos and Folios, Browning and Shelley Societies, Sculling-Fours, Kangaroo bicycles, evenings out, and general laziness, I fear that edition must be left for some more learned and energetic person than myself. Let it suffice that the Chaucer Society has cleared the way for the coming man. I am due now at our Rowing-Club Dance.

British Museum,

Friday, Jan. 8, 1886, 7.30 p.m., under the Electric Light.

¹ The Harl. 7334 also has not the (?) original but rejected End-Link to the Clerk's Tale, p. $\frac{477}{33}$ of the Ellesmere MS.

² The epithet of Sir G. Grove, the then Editor. I wanted 'late.

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¹ It has not the Friar lines 252 *b*, *c* of the Hengwrt MS.² Eight genuine lines, 4415—4422, are left out here.³ Five genuine lines at the end are left out, 1186—1190.

Group	Six-Text	Harl.
	pages	pages
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¹ The ordinary lines G. 1295-6 of this Link which are wrongly shifted in the Six-Texts, &c. (p. 371) from *The Friar's Tale*, of which they form lines G. 1307-8, p. $\frac{377}{232}$, are put in their right place on p. $\frac{371}{231}$, by the Harl. MS 7334.

² Eight spurious lines, D. 2004 *b, c*; 2012 *b, c*; 2037 *b, c*; 2048 *b, c*, p. $\frac{393}{33}-4$ are stuck into Harl. 7334.

³ The stanzas of this are in their right order.

⁴ The end of what there is, is out of the Harl. MS, as 8 leaves of the MS are missing here, p. $\frac{406}{354}-\frac{314}{353}$.

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¹ Four lines, 299-300 and 305-6, are left out in this.

² Dr Richard Morris was the first to track this to its source in one of the Buddhist Jataka Tales. He englisht it long ago for me, and mentiond the Eastern source in his article in *The Contemporary Review*, May 1881, p. 728-749.

³ For B § 1—3 see Man-of-Law's Head-Link, Tale and End-Link, p. $\frac{1}{4}\frac{2}{3}$, above.

⁴ The four 'modern instances'—1. Peter (the Cruel) of Spain, 2. Peter of Cyprus, 3. Barnabo Visconti of Milan, and 4. Ugolino, Count of Pisa—are rightly put after Zenobia, l. 3564, p. $\frac{2}{3}\frac{6}{3}$, and not at the end of the Tale as in the Ellesmere and other A MSS, p. 500-3 Elles. But one stanza is missing, B 3213-20, p. $\frac{2}{3}\frac{5}{4}$.

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GROUP A. FRAGMENT I.

§ 1. GENERAL PROLOGUE.

HARLEIAN MS. 7334 (British Museum).

WHan that aprile with his schowres swoote [leaf 1]
The droughȝt of Marche haþ perced to þe roote
And bathud euery veyne in swich licour
Of which vertue engendred is þe flour 4
whan ȝephirus eek with his swete breeth
Enspirud haþ in euery holte and heeth

The tendre croppes and þe ȝonge sonne
hath in the Ram his halfe cours I-ronne 8
And smale fowles maken melodie
That slepen al þe night wiþ open yhe
So prikeþ hem nature in here corages
Thanne longen folk to gon on pilgrimages 12
And palmers for to seeken straunge strondes
To ferne halwes kouthe in sondry londes
And specially from euery schires ende
Of Engelond to Canturbury þey wende 16
The holy blisful martir for to seeke
That hem haþ holpen whan þat þey were seeke

Byfel þat in þat sesoun on a day
In Southwerk at þe Tabbard as I lay 20
Redy to wenden on my pilgrymage
To Canturbury with ful deuout corage
At night was come in to þat hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a companye 24
Of sondry folk by auenture I-falle
In felaschipe and pilgryms were þei alle
That toward Canturbury wolden ryde

The Chambres and þe stables weren wyde 28
 And wel we weren esud atte beste
 And schortly whan þe sonne was to reste
 So hadde I spoken with hem euerychon
 That I was of here felawschipe anon 32
 And made forward erly to a Ryse
 To take oure weye ther as I 3ow deuysel
 But natheles whiles I haue tyme and space
 Or þat I ferþere in þis tale pace 36
 Me þinkeþ it acordant to resoun
 To telle 3ow alle þe condicioun
 Of eche of hem so as it semed me [leaf 1, back]
 And which þey weren and of what degre 40
 And eek in what array þat þey were Inne
 And at a knight than wol I first bygygne
A Knight þer was and þat a worþy man 44
 That from þe tyme þat he ferst bigan
 To ryden out he louede Chyualrye
 Trouthe and honour fredom and curtesie
 Ful worthi was he in his lordes werre
 And þerto hadde he riden noman ferre 48
 As wel in Cristendom as hethenesse
 And euere honoured for his worþinesse
 At Alisandre he was whan it was wonne
 Ful ofte tyme he hadde þe bord bygonne / 52
 Abouen alle naciouns in pruce
 In lettowe hadde Reyced and in Ruce
 No cristen man so ofte of his degre
 In Gernade atte siege hadde he be 56
 At Algesir and riden in Belmarie
 At lieys was he and at Satalie
 At many a noble ariue hadde he be
 whan þey were wonne and in þe greete see 60
 At mortal batailles hadde he ben fiftene
 And foughten for oure feith at Tramassene
 In lystes pries and ay slayn his foo

GROUP A. § 1. GENERAL PROLOGUE. Harleian 7334. 3

This ilke worpi knight hadde ben also 64
 Somtyme with þe lord of Palatye
 Ageyn anoper hethene in Turkye
 And eueremore he hadde a souereyn prys
 And þough he was worpy he was wys 68
 And of his port as meke as a mayde
 he neuer ȝit no vilonye ne sayde
 In al his lyf vnto no maner wight
 he was a verray perfȝt gentil knight 72
 But for to telle ȝou of his array
 his hors was good but he ne was nouȝt gay
 Of fustyan he wered a Gepoun
 Al by smoterud with his haburgeoun 76
 For he was late comen from his viage [leaf 2]
 And wente for to doon his pilgrimage
With him þer was his sone a ȝongr squyer
 A louyer and a lusty bacheler 80
 With lokkes crulle as þey were layde in presse
 Of twenty ȝeer he was of age I gesse
 Of his stature he was of euene lengthe
 And wonderly delyuer and gret of strengthe 84
 And he hadde ben som tyme in Chiuachie
 In Flaundres in Artoys and in Picardie
 And born him wel as in so litel space
 In hope to stonden in his lady grace / 88
 Embrowdid was he as it were a mede /
 Al ful of fresshe floures white and reede
 Syngynge he was or flowtynge al þe day
 he was as fressh as is the moneth of may 92
 Schort was his goune with sleeues long and wyde
 wel cowde he sitte on hors and wel cowde he ryde
 he cowde songes wel make and endite
 Iustne and eek daunce and wel purtray and write 96
 So hote he louede pat by nightertale
 he sleep nomore þan doþ a nightyngale
 Curteys he was lowly and seruysable

And carf^t byforn his fadur at^t þe table / 100

A ȝeman had he / and *seruantes* nomoo
At^t þat^t tyme for him lust^t ryde soo
And he was clad in coote and hood of^t grene
A shef^t of^t pocok^t arwes bright^t and kene 104
vnder his belte he bar ful þriftily

wel cowde he dresse his takel ȝomanly
His arwes drowpud nouȝt^t wiþ fetheres lowe
And in his hond he bar a mighty bowe 108

A not^t heed hadde he wiþ a broun visage
Of^t woode craft^t cowde he wel al þe vsage
vpon his arme he bar a gay bracer
And by his side a swerd and a bokeler 112

And on þat^t oþer side a gay daggere
harneysed wel and scharp as poynt^t of^t spere
A cristofre on his brest^t of^t siluer schene [leaf 2, back]
An horn he bar þe bawdrik^t was of^t grene 116

A forster was he sothely as I gesse
Ther was also a Nonne a prioresse
That^t of^t hire smylyng^t was ful symple and coy
hire grettest^t ooth nas but by seynt^t loy 120

And sche was clept^t/ madame Englentyne
Ful wel sche sang^t þe seruise deuyne
Entuned in hire nose ful semyly
And frensch sche spak^t ful faire and fetysly 124

Aftur þe scole of^t Stratford atte Bowe
For frensch of^t Parys was to hire vnknowe
At^t mete wel I-taught^t was sche with alle
Sche leet^t no morsel from hire lippes falle 128

Ne wette hire fyngres in hire sauce deepe
wel cowde sche carie a morsel and wel keepe
That^t no drope fil vpon hire brest^t
In Curtesie was sett al hire lest^t 132

hire ouerlippe wypud sche so clene
That in hire Cuppe was no ferþing sene
Of^t grees whan sche dronken hadde hire draught

Ful semely aftur hir mete sche raught 136
 And sikurly sche was of gret disport
 And ful plesant/ and amyable of port
 And peyned hire to counterfete cheere
 Of court and ben estatlich of manere 140
 And to ben holden digne of Reuerence
 But for to speken of hire conscience
 Sche was so charitable and so pitous
 Sche wolde weepe if þat sche sawe a Mous 144
 Caught in a trappe if it were deed or bledde
 Of smale houndes hadde sche þat sche fedde
 With rostud fleiss and mylk and wastel breed
 But sore wepte sche if oon of hem were deed 148
 Or if men smot it wiþ a 3erde smerte
 And al was conscience and tendre herte
 Ful semely hire wymples I-pynched was
 Hire nose streight hire eyen grey as glas 152
 Hire mouth ful smal and þerto softe and reed [leaf 8]
 But sikurly sche hadde a fair forheed
 It was almost a spanne brood I trowe
 For hardily sche was not vndurgrowe 156
 Ful fetys was hire cloke as I was waar
 Of smal coral aboute hire arme sche baar
 A peire of bedes gaudid al with grene
 And þer on heng a broch of gold ful schene 160
 On which was first I-writen a crowned A.
 And after þat Amor vincit omnia.
 Anothur Nonne with hire hadde sche
 That was hire Chapelleyn and prestes þre 164
A Monk þer was a fair for the maistrie
 An out Rydere þat loved venerye
 A manly man to ben an abbot able
 Ful many a deynte hors hadde he in stable 168
 And whan he rood men might his bridel heere
 Gyngle in a whistlyng wynd so cleere
 And eek as lowde as doþ þe chapel belle

Ther as þe lord was keper of þe selle 172
 The Reule of seynt maure or of seint Beneyt
 By cause þat it was old and somdel streyt
 This ilke monk leet forby hem pace
 And helde aftur þe newe world þe space 176
 he ȝaf nat of þat text a pulled hen
 That seiþ þat hunters been noon holy men
 Ne þat a monk whan he is Cloysterles
 Is likned to a fissche þat is watirles 180
 This is to seyn a monk out of his cloystre
 But þilke text hild he not worþ an oystre /
 And I seide his opinioun was good
 what schulde he studie and make himseluen wood 184
 Vppon a book in Cloystre alway to powre
 Or swynke with his handes and laboure
 As Austyn byt // how schal þe world be serued
 lat austyn haue his swynk to him reserued 188
 Therefore he was a pricasour aright
 Greyhoundes he hadde as swifte as fowel in flight
 Of prikyng and of huntyng for þe hare [leaf 3, back]
 was al his lust for no cost wolde he spare 192
 I saugh his sleues purfild atte hond
 wiþ grys and that þe fynest of a lond
 And for to festne his hood vndur his chyn
 he hadde of gold y-wrought a curious pyn 196
 A loue knotte in þe gretter ende þer was
 His heed was ballid and schon as eny glas
 And eek his face as he hadde be anoynt
 he was a lord ful fat and in good poynt 200
 his eyen steep and rollyng in his heed
 That stemed as a forneys of a leed
 His bootes souple his hors in gret estat
 Now certainly he was a fair prelat 204
 he was not pale as a for-pyned goost
 A fat swan loued he best of eny roost
 His palfray was as broun as eny berye

A Frere þer was a wantoun and a merye 208
 A lymytour a ful solempne man
 In alle the ordres foure is noon þat can
 So moche of daliaunce and fair langage
 He hadde I-made many a fair mariage 212
 Of 3onge wymmen at his owne cost
 vnto his ordre he was a noble post
 Ful wel biloued and famulier was he
 with Frankeleyns ouer al in his cuntre 216
 And eek with worpi wommen of þe toun
 For he hadde power of confessioun
 As seyde himself more þan a curat
 For of his ordre he was licenciат/ 220
 Ful sweetly herde he confessioun
 And plesaunt was his absolucioun
 He was an esy man to 3eue penance
 Ther as he wiste han a good pitance 224
 For vnto a poure ordre for to 3eue
 Is signe þat a man is wel I-schreue
 For if he 3af he dorste make auaunt
 He wiste þat a man was repentaunt 228
 For many a man so hard is of his herte [leaf 4]
 He may not wepe þough him sore smerte
 Therfore in stede of wepyng and prayeres
 Men mooten 3iuen siluer to þe pore freres 232
 His typet was ay farsud ful of knyfes
 And pynnes for to 3iue faire wyfes
 And certayn he hadde a mery noote
 wel couthe he synge and pleye on a Rote 236
 Of 3eddynges he bar vtturly þe prys
 his nekke whit was as þe flour delys
 Ther to he strong was as a Champioun
 He knew wel þe tauernes in euery toun 240
 And euery Ostiller or gay tapstere
 Bet þan a lazer or a beggere
 For vnto such a worpi man as he

Acorded not^t as by his faculte 244
 To haue with sike lazars aqueyntaunce
 It is not^t honest it may not^t avaunce
 For to delen with such poraile
 But^t al with riche and sellers of^t vitaille 248
 And ouer al þer eny profyt^t schulde arise
 Curteys he was. and lowe of^t seruyse
 Ther was no man no wher so vertuous
 He was þe beste begger in al his hous 252
 [.
 *no gap in the MS.*]
 For þough a widewe hadde but oo schoo
 So plesaunt^t was his In principio
 3et^t wolde he haue a ferthing^t or he wente
 his purchase was bettur þan his rente 256
 And rage he coupe and pleye as a whelp
 In loue-dayes ther couthe he mochil helpe
 For þer was he not like a cloysterer
 With a thred-bare cope as a pore scoler 260
 But he was like a maister or a pope
 Of double worstede was his semy cope /
 That^t rounded was as a belle out^t of presse
 Somwhat^t he lippede for wantounesse / 264
 To make his Englissch swete vpon his tunge
 And in his harpyng^t whan þat^t he hadde sunge
 His eyzen twynkeled in his heed aright^t [leaf 4, back]
 As don þe sterres in þe frosty night^t 268
 This worthi lymytour was called huberd
 A Marchaunt^t was þer wip a forked berd
 In motteleye high on horse he sat^t
 vppon his heed a Flaundrisch beuer hat/ 272
 His botus clapsud faire and fetously
 His resons he spak^t ful solempnely
 Swownynge alway the encres of^t his wynnyng^t
 He wolde þe see were kepud for eny þing^t 276
 Bitwixe Middulburgh and Orewelle /

wel coupe he in eschange scheeldes selle /
 This worpi man ful wel his witte bisette
 Ther wiste no man that he was in dette 280
 So estately was he of gouernaunce
 with his bargayns and with his cheuysaunce
 For sothe he was a worpi man with alle
 Bot soth to say I not what men him calle / 284
A Clerk per was of Oxenford also
 That vnto logik hadde longe I-go
 Al so lene was his hors as is a rake
 And he was not right fat I vndertake 288
 But lokede holwe and perto soburly
 Ful thredbare was his ouerest courtepy
 For he hadde nouzt geten hym 3it a benefice
 Ne was not worpy to hauen an office 292
 For him was leuer haue at his beddes heed
 Twenty bookes cloped in blak and reed
 Of Aristotil and of his philosophie
 Then Robus Riche or fithul or Sawtrie 296
 But al pough he were a philosophre
 3et hadde he but litul gold in cofre
 But al pat he might gete and his frendes sende
 On bookes and his lernynge he it spende 300
 And busily gan for pe soules pray
 Of hem pat 3af him wherwith to scolay
 Of studie tooke he most cure and heede
 Not oo word spak he more pan was neede 304
 Al pat he spak it was of heye prudence [leaf 5]
 And schort and quyke and ful of gret sentence
 Sownynge in moral manere was his speche /
 And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche 308
A Sergeant of lawe war and wys
 That often hadde ben atte paruys
 Ther was also ful riche of excellence
 Discret he was and of gret Reuerence 312
 He semed such his wordes were so wise

Iustice he was fuloften in assise
 By patent^t and by pleyn comissioun
 For his science and for his heih renown 316
 Of^t fees and Robes had he many oon
 So gret^t a purchasour was þer no wher noon
 Al was fee symple to him in effecte
 his purchasyng^t might^t nought^t ben to hī m suspecte 320
 No wher so besy a man as he þer nas /
 And ȝit^t he semed besier þan he was
 In termes hadde caas and domes alle
 That fro þe tyme þat kyng^t were falle 324
 Ther to he couþe endite and make a þing^t
 Ther couþe no man pynche at his writyng^t
 And euery statute couthe he pleyn by roote
 He rood but^t hoomly in a medled coote 328
 Gird with a seynt of silk^t wiþ barres smale
 Of his array telle I no lenger tale
A Frankeleyn þer was in his companye /
 whit^t was his berde as þe dayesye 332
 Of his complexioun he was sangwyn
 wel loued he in þe morn a sop of^t wyn
 To lyue in delite was al his wone
 For he was Epicurius owne sone 336
 That^t heeld opynyoun þat pleyn delyt
 was verrailly felicite perfyt^t
 An houshaldere and þat^t a gret was he
 Seynt^t Iulian he was in his countre 340
 his breed his ale was alway after oon
 A bettre envyned man was no wher noon.
 wiþoute bake mete was neuer his hous [leaf 5, back]
 Of fleissch and fisch and þat^t so plentiuous 344
 Hit^t snewed in his hous of mete and drynk^t
 Of alle deyntees þat^t men cowde þynk^t
 Aftur þe sondry sesouns of^t þe ȝeer
 He chaunged hem at mete and at soper 348
 Ful many a fat partrich had he in mewe

And many a brem and many a luce in stewe
 Woo was his Cook^t but if^t his sauce were
 Poynant^t and scharp and redy al his gere 352
 His table dormant^t in his halle alway^t

Stood redy couered al þe longe day
 At sessions þer was he lord and sire
 Ful ofte tyme he was knight of^t þe schire 356
 An Anlas and a gipser al of^t silk^t

heng^t at his gerdul whit^t as morne mylk^t
 A schirreue hadde he ben and a counter
 was nowher such a worthi vauaser 360

AN haburdassher and a Carpenter
 A webbe a deyer and a Tapicer
 weren with vss eēke clothed in oo lyuere
 Of a solempne and gret^t fraternite 364

Ful freissh and newe his gere piked was
 Here knyfes were I-chapud nat^t with bras
 But^t al with siluer wrought^t ful clene and wel
 here gurdles and here pouches euery del 368

wel semed eche of^t hem a fair burgeys
 To sitten in a 3eldehalle on þe deys
 Euery man for þe wisdom þat he can
 was schaply for to ben an aldurman · 372

For Catel hadde þey Inough and rente /
 And cek^t here wyfes wolde it^t wel assente /
 And elles certeyn hadde þei ben to blame
 It is right^t fair for to be clept^t Ma Dame 376

And for to go to vigilies al byfore
 And han a mantel rially I-bore

ACook^t þei hadde with hem for þe nones
 To boyle chiknes and þe mary bones 380
 And poudre marchaunt / tart^t and galyngale

wel cowde he knowe a drauȝt^t of^t londoun ale
 He cowde roste sethe boille and frie
 Make mortreux and wel bake a pye 384
 But^t gret^t harm was it as it^t semede me

[leaf 6]

That on his schyne a mormal hadde he
 For blankmanger he made with þe beste

A Schipman was þer wonyng fer by weste 388
 For ought I woot he was of Dertemouthe

He rood vpon a rouncey as he couþe
 In a gowne of faldyng to þe kne
 A dagger hangyng on a laas hadde he 392

Aboute his nekke vnder his arm a doun
 The hoothe somer had maad his hew al broun
 And certainly he was a good felawe
 Ful many a draught of wyn had he drawe 396

From Burdeuxward, whil þat þe chapman sleep
 Of nyce conscience took he no keep
 If þat he foughte and hadde þe heiþer hand
 By water he sente hem hoom to euery land 400

But of his craft to rikne wel þe tydes
 his stremes and his dangers him bisides
 His herbergh and his mone his lodemenage
 Ther was non such from hulle to Cartage 404

Hardy he was and wys to vndertake
 with many a tempest hath his berd ben schake
 He knew wel alle þe hauenes as þei were
 From Scotlond to the cape of fynestere 408

And euery Cryk in Bretayne and in Spayne
 His Barge y-clepud was the Magdelayne

Ther was also a Doctour of phisik
 In al þis world ne was þer non him lyk 412

To speke of phisik and of Surgerye
 For he was groundud in astronomye
 he kepte his pacient wondrously wel
 In houres by his magik naturel 416

wel cowde he fortune the ascendent
 Of his ymages for his pacient
 He knew þe cause of euery maladye [leaf 6, back]
 were it of cold or hete or moyst or drye 420
 And where þei engendrid and of what humour

he was a verrey parfight practisour
 The cause I-knowe and of his harm þe roote
 Anon he ʒaf þe syke man his boote 424
 Ful redy hadde he his apotecaries
 To sende him dragges and his letuaries
 For eche of hem made oþur to wynne
 Here frendschipe nas not newe to begynne 428
 wel knew he þe olde Esculapius
 And deiscorides. and eeke Rusus
 Old ypocras. haly and Galien
 Serapyon. Razis and Auycen 432
 Auerrois damascen and Constantyn
 Bernad and Gatisden and Gilbertyn
 Of his diete mesurable was he
 For it was of no superfluite 436
 But of gret norisching and digestible
 His studie was but litel on þe bible
 In sangwyn and in pers he clad was al
 Lynced with taffata and with Sendal 440
 And ʒit he was but esy in dispence
 He kepte þat he wan in pestilence
 For gold in phisik is a cordial
 Ther fore he louede gold in special 444
A Good wif was þer of byside bathe
 But sche was somdel deaf and þat was skape
 Of cloth makynge sche hadde such an haunt
 Sche passed hem of ypris and of Gaunt 448
 In al þe parisshe wyf ne was ther noon
 That to þe offryng byforn hire schulde goon
 And if þer dide certeyn so wroth was sche
 That sche was þanne out of alle charite 452
 hire keuerchefs weren ful fyne of grounde
 I durste swere þey weyʒede ten pounce
 That on a sonday were vpon hire heed
 hire hosen were of fyn scarlett reed 456
 Ful streyte y-tyed and schoos ful moyste and newe [leaf 7]

Bold was hir face and fair and reed of^t heewe
 Sche was a worpy womman al hire lyfe
 Housbondes atte chirche dore hadde sche fyfe 460
 withouten oþur companye in ȝouthe
 But^t therof^t needeth nouȝt^t to speke as nouthe
 And þries hadde sche ben at^t Ierusalem
 Sche hadde passud many a straunge streem 464
 At Rome sche hadde ben and at^t Boloyn
 In Galice at^t seynt^t Iame and at^t Coloyne
 Sche cowde moche of^t wandryng^t by þe weye
 Gattothud was sche soþly for to seye 468
 vppon an amblere esely sche sat
 wymplid ful wel and on hire heed an hat
 As brood as is a boeler or a Targe
 A foot^t mantel aboute hire hupes large 472
 And on hire feet a paire of^t spores scharpe
 In felawschipe wel cowde lawghe and carpe
 Of^t Remedyes of^t loue sche knew *par* chaunce
 For of^t þat^t art^t sche knew þe olde daunce 476
A Good man was ther of Religioun
 And was a pore persoun of^t a toun
 But riche he was of^t holy þought and werk^t
 He was also a lerned man a Clerk^t 480
 That cristes gospel gladly wolde preche
 His *parischens* deuoutly wold he teche
 Benigne he was and wondur diligent
 And in aduersite ful pacient 484
 And such he was I-proued ofte sithes
 Ful loth were him to curse for his tythes
 But^t raper wolde he ȝeuen out^t of^t dowte
 vnto his pore parisschens aboute 488
 Of^t his offrynge and eek^t of^t his substaunce
 he cowde in litel þing^t han suffisance
 wyd was his parisch and houses fer asondur
 But^t he ne lasfe not^t for reyn ne þondur 492
 In siknesse ne in meschief^t to visite

The ferrest^t in his parissche moche and lite
 Vppon his feet and in his hond a staf^t [leaf 7, back]
 This noble ensample vnto his scheep he ȝaf^t 496
 That^t ferst^t he wroughte and after þat he taughte
 Out^t of þe gospel he þo wordes caughte /
 And þis figure he addid ȝit^t þerto
 That^t if gold ruste what^t schulde yren doo[?] 500
 For if a prest be foul on whom we truste
 No wondur is a lewid man to ruste ;
 And schame it is if a prest^t take kepe
 A schiten schepperd and a clene schepe 504
 wel oughte a prest ensample for to ȝiue
 By his clenness how þat^t his scheep schulde lyue
 he sette not^t his benefice to huyre
 And lefte his scheep encombred in þe myre 508
 And ran to londown vnto seynte poules
 To seeken him a chaunterie for soules
 Or with a brethurhede be wiþ-holde
 But^t dwelte at^t hoom and kepte wel his folde / 512
 So þat^t þe wolf^t ne made it not myscarye
 He was a schepparde and no mercenarie
 And þough he holy were and vertuous
 he was to senful man nought^t dispitous 516
 Ne of^t his speche daungerous ne digne
 But^t in his teching^t discret^t and benigne
 To drawe folk^t to heuen by clenness
 By good ensample was his busynesse 520
 But^t it were eny *par*sone obstinat^t
 what^t so he were of^t high or lowe estat^t
 him wolde he snybbe scharply for þe nones
 A better preest I trowe ther nowher non is 524
 he waytud after no pompe ne reuerence
 Ne maked him a spiced conscience /
 But^t cristes lore and his apostles twelue
 he taught^t. and ferst^t he folwed it^t himselue 528

With hem þer was a plough man his broþur

That hadde I-lad of dong ful many a fopur
 A trewe swynker and a good was hee
 Lyuyng in pees and parfyzt charitee 532
 God loued he best al his trewe herte [leaf 8]
 At alle tymes pough him gamed or smerte
 And þanne his neighebour right as himselue
 He wolde threisshe and þerto dyke and delue 536
 For cristes sake with euery pore wight
 wipouten huyre if it laye in his might
 His tythes payede he ful faire and wel
 Bathe of his owne swynk and his catel 540
 In a tabbard Rood vpon a mere
Ther was also a Reeue and a mellere
 A sompnour and a pardonor also
 A maunciple and my self þer was no mo 544
THe mellere was a stout carl for þe nones
 Full big he was of braun and eek of boones /
 That preuede wel for ouer al þer he cam
 At wrastlyng he wolde bere away þe Ram 548
 He was schort schuldred broode a pikke knarre
 Ther was no dore þat he nolde heue of harre
 Or breke it with a rennyng with his heed
 his berd as ony sowe or fox was reed 552
 And þerto brood as pough it were a spade
 vpon þe cop right of his nose he hade
 A werte and þer on stood a tuft of heres
 Reede as þe berstles of a souwes eeres 556
 his nose þurles blake were and wyde
 A swerd and a bocler baar he by his side
 His mouth as wyde was as a gret forneys
 he was a Iangler and a golyardeys 560
 And þat was most of synne and harlotries
 wel cowde he stele corn and tollen pries
 And zet he hadde a þombe of golde parde
 A whizt cote and blewe hood wered he 564
 A bagge pipe. cowde he blowe and sowne

And þerwip al he brought vs out of towne

A Gentil maunciple was ther of a temple
Of which achatours mighten take exemple 568

For to be wys in beyng of vitaille

For wheþur þat he payde or took by taile

Algate he wayted so in his acate [leaf 8, back]

That he was ay biforn and in good state 572

Now is not þat of god a ful fair grace

That such a lewed mannes wit schal pace

The wisdom of an heep of lernede men

Of maystres hadde moo þan þries ten 576

That were of lawe expert and curious

Of which þer were a doseyn in an hous

worthi to be stiward of Rente and lond

Of any lord þat is in Engelond 580

To make him lyue by his propre good

In honour detteles but if he were wood

Of lyue as scarsly as he can desire

And able for to helpen al a schire 584

In any caas þat mighte falle or happe

And ȝit this maunciple sette here aller cappe

The Reeue was a sklendre colerik man

his berd was schaue as neigh as euer he can 588

his heer was by his Eres neigh I-schorn

his top was dockud lyk a preest biforn

Ful longe wern his leggis and ful lene

Al like a staff ther was no calf y-sene 592

wel cowde he kepe a gerner and a bynne

Ther was non auditour cowde on him wyne

wel wiste he by the drouȝht and by þe Reyn

The ȝeeldyng of his seed and of his greyn 596

his lordes scheep his neet his dayerie

his swyn his hors his stoor and his pultrie

was holly in this Reeues gouernynge

And by his couenaunt ȝaf þe Rekenynge 600

Syn þat his lord was .xx.^{ti} ȝeer of age

Ther couthe noman bringe him in arrerage
 Ther nas baillif^t ne herde ne oþer hyne
 That þey ne knewe his sleight^t and his couyne 604
 They were adrad of him as of þe deth
 his wonyng^t was ful fair vpon an heth
 wiþ grene trees I-schadewed was his place
 he cowde bettre þan his lord purchace 608
 Ful riche he was I-stored priuely [leaf 9]
 His lord wel couthe he plese subtilly
 To ȝeue him and lene him of^t his owne good
 And haue a þank^t a cote and eek^t an hood 612
 In ȝouþe he lerned hadde a good mester
 he was a wel good wright^t a carpenter
 This Reeue sat^t vpon a wel good stof^t
 That^t was a pomely gray and highte Scot^t 616
 A long^t surcote of^t blew vppon he hadde
 And by his side he bar a Rusty bladde
 Of Northfolk^t was þis Reeue of^t which I telle
 Byside a toun men callen Baldeswelle 620
 Tukkud he was as is a frere aboute
 And euer he rood the hynderest^t of þe route
 A Sompnour was þer with vs in þat^t place
 That^t hadde a fyr-reed Cherubyns face 624
 For sawceflem he was with eyzen narwe
 As hoot^t he was and leccherous as a sparwe
 Wiþ skalled browes blak and piled berd
 Of^t his visage children weren aferd 628
 Ther nas quyk^t siluer litarge ne bremstoñ
 Boras Ceruce ne oille of^t Tartre noñ
 Ne oynement^t þat^t wolde clense and byte
 That^t him might^t helpen of his welkes white 632
 Ne of^t þe knobbes sittynge on his cheekes
 wel loued he garleek^t oynouns and ek^t leekes
 And for to drinke strong^t wyn reed as blood
 Thanne wolde he speke and crye as he were wood 636
 And whan that^t he wel dronken hadde þe wyn

Than wolde he speke no word but latyn
 A fewe termes hadde he tuo or þre
 That he hadde lerned out of som decree 640
 No wondur is he herde it al þe day
 And eek þe knowe wel how þat a Iay
 Can clepe watte as wel as can þe pope
 But who-so wolde in oþur þing him grope 644
 Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophie
 Ay questio quid Iuris wolde he crye
 He was a gentil harlot and a kynde [leaf 9, back]
 A bettre felaw schulde men nowher fynde 648
 He wolde suffre for a quart of wyn
 A good felawe han his concubyn
 A .xij. moneth. and excuse him atte fulle
 And pryuely a Fynch eek cowde he pulle 652
 And if he fond owher a good felawe
 he wolde teche him for to haue non awe
 In such a caas of þe archedeknes curs
 But if a mannes soule were in his purs 656
 For in his purs he scholde punyssched be
 Purs is the Ercedeknes helie *quod* he
 But wel I woot he lyeth right in dede
 Of cursyng oweth ech gulty man to drede 660
 For curs wol slee. right as assoillyng saueth
 And also ware him of a Significaut
 In daunger he hadde at his owne assise
 The 3onge gurles of the Diccise 664
 And knew here counseil and was al here red
 A garland had he set vpon his heed
 As gret as it were for an ale stake
 A bokeler had he maad him of a cake 668
With him þer rood a gentil Pardoner
 Of Rounciual his frend and his comper
 That streyt was comen from þe court of Rome
 Ful lowde he sang com hider loue tome 672
 The sompnour bar to him a stif burdown

was neuere trompe of half^t so gret^t a soun^d
 This pardonere hadde heer as ȝelwe as wex
 But smothe it heng^t as doth a strike of Flex 676
 By vnces hyngē his lokkes þat he hadde
 And þerwith he his schuldres ouerspradde
 Ful thenne it lay by culpons on and oon
 And hood for Iolitee ne wered he noon 680
 For it was trussud vp in his walet
 Him þought^t he rood al of þe newe get^t
 Discheuele sauf^t his cappe he rood al bare
 Suche glaryng^t eyȝen hadde he as an hare 684
 A vernicle hadde he sowed on his cappe [leaf 10]
 His walet^t lay byforn him in his lappe
 Bret^t ful of^t pardoun come from Rome al hoot
 A voys he hadde as smal as eny goot 688
 No berd ne hadde he ne neuer scholde haue
 As smothe it was as it ware late I-schaue /
 I trowe he were a geldyng^t or a mare
 But^t of^t his craft^t fro Berwyk^t vnto ware 692
 Ne was þer such another pardonere
 For in his male he hadde a pilwebeer
 which þat he saide was oure lady veyl
 he seide he hadde a gobet^t of^t þe seyl 696
 That seynt^t Petur hadde whan he wente
 Vppon þe see til ihū crist^t him hente
 he hadde a cros of^t latoun ful of^t stones
 And in a glas he hadde pigges bones 700
 But^t with þise reliques whanne þat he fand
 A pore parsoun dwellyng^t vppon land
 vpon a day he gat him more moneye
 Than þat þe parsoun gat^t in monthes tweye 704
 And þus with feyned flaterie and Iapes
 he made þe parsoun and þe poeple his apes
 But^t trewely to tellen atte laste
 He was in churche a noble ecclesiaste 708
 wel cowde he rede a lessoun or a storye

But^t altherbest^t he sang^t an offertorie
 For wel¹ he whan þat song^t was songe [¹ later wyst at side]
 he moste preche and wel affyle his tunge 712
 To wynne siluer as he right^t wel cowde
 Therefore he sang^t ful meriely and lowde
Now haue I told 3ou schortly in a clause
 Thestat^t þarray þe nombre and eek^t þe cause 716
 why þat^t assembled was þis companye
 In Southwerk^t at þis gentil Ostelrie
 That^t highte þe Tabbard faste by þe belle
 But^t now is tyme to 3ow for to telle 720
 how þat we bare vs in þat ilke night
 whan we were in that Ostelrie alight^t
 And aftur wol I telle of^t oure viage [leaf 10, back]
 And al þe remenaunt of^t oure pilgimage 724
But^t ferst^t I pray 3ou of^t 3our curtesie
 That^t 3e ne rette it nat^t my vilanye
 Though þat^t I speke al pleyn in þis matere
 And telle 3ou here wordes and here cheere 728
 Ne though I speke here wordes *propurly*
 For þis 3e knowen also wel as I
 who-so schal telle a tale aftur a man
 He moste reherce as neigh as euer he can 732
 Euery word if it be in his charge
 Al speke he neuer so Rudely ne large
 Or elles he moot^t telle his tale vntrewe
 Or feyne þing^t or fynde his wordes newe 736
 He may not^t spare þough he were his broþur
 He moste as wel sey oo word as anoþur
 Crist^t spak^t himself ful broode in holy writ
 And wel 3e woot^t no vilanye is it 740
 Eke Plato seith who-so þat^t can him rede
 The wordes mot^t be cosyn to þe dede
 Also I pray 3ou to for3eue it me
 Al haue I folk^t nat^t set^t in here degre 744
 Here in þis tale as þat^t þei schulde stonde

My witt^t is thynne. 3e may wel vndurstonde

G Reet^t cheere made oure ost^t vs euerichon

And to þe souper sette he vs anon 748

He serued vs with vitaille atte beste

Strong^t was þe wyn and wel to drynke vs leste

A semely man oure Ooste was wiþ alle

For to han been a Marchal in an halle 752

A large man was he with eyzen stepe

A fairere burgeys is þer noon in chepe

Bold of^t his speche and wys and wel I-taught^t

And of^t manhede lakkede he right naught 756

Eke þerto he was right^t a mery man

And after soper playen he bygan

And spak^t of^t myrthe. among^t oþur þinges

whan þat we hadde maad our rekenynges 760

And sayde þus. Lo lordynges trewely

[leaf 11]

3e ben to me right^t welcome hertily

For by my trouthe if^t þat^t I schal not^t lye

I ne saugh þis 3eer so mery a companye 764

At oones in this herbergh as is now

Fayn wold I do 3ow merthe wiste I how

And of^t a merthe I am right^t now bythought^t

To doon 3ou eese and it^t schal coste nought^t 768

3e goon to Caunturbury god 3ou speede

The blisful martir quyte 3ou 3oure meede

And wel I woot/ as 3e gon by þe weye

3e schapen 3ow to talken and to pleye 772

For trewely comfort^t ne merthe is noon

To Ryde by þe weye domb as a stoon

And þerfore wol I make 3ou disport^t /

As I seyde erst^t and do 3ou som comfort^t 776

And if^t 3ow liketh alle by oon assent

Now for to standen at^t my Iuggement

And for to werken as I schal 3ou seye

To morwe whan 3e riden by þe weye 780

Now by my fadres soule þat is deed

But 3e be merye smyteþ of myn heed
 hold vp 3oure hond with-oute more speche
 Oure counseil was not longe for to seche 784
 vs þoughte it nas nat' worþ to make it wys
 And graunted him wiþoute more avys
 And bad him seie his verdite as him leste
L Ordynge quop he now herkenep for þe beste 788
 But taketh not' I pray 3ou in disdayn
 This is þe poynt to speken schort' and playn
 That' ech of 3ow to schorte with 3oure weie /
 In þis viage schal telle tales tweye 792
 To Caunturburiward I mene it so
 And homward he schal tellen oþur tuo
 Of' auentures þat' þer han bifalle
 And which of' 3ow þat' bereþ him best' of' alle 796
 That is to seye þat' telleþ in þis caas
 Tales of' best' sentence and of' solas
 Schal han a soper at' 3our alþer cost [leaf 11, back]
 Here in þis place sittynge by þis post' 800
 whan þat we comen ageyn from Canturbery
 And for to make 3ou þe more mery
 I wol my seluen gladly with 3ou ryde
 Right' at' myn owen cost' and be 3oure gyde 804
 And who-so wole my Iuggement' withseie
 Schal paye for al we spenden by þe weye
 And if' 3e vouche sauf' þat it be so
 Telle me anon wiþouten wordes moo 808
 And I wole erely schappe me þerfore
 This þing' was graunted and oure othus swore
 with ful glad herte and prayden him also
 That' he would vouche sauf' for to doon so 812
 And þat' he wolde ben oure gouvernour
 And of' our tales Iugge and reportour
 And sette a souper at a certeyn prys
 And we wolde rewled be at his deuys 816
 In heygh and lowe. and þus by oon assent

We been acorded to his Iuggement
 And þer-vpon þe wyn was fet' anoon
 we dronken and to reste wente echoon. 820
 wiþouten eny lengere tarynge
 A morwe whan þat' þe day bigan to sprynge
 vp roos oure Ost' and was oure althur cok'
 And gaderud vs to-gidur alle in a flok' 824
 And forth we riden a litel more þan paas
 vnto þe waterynge of' seint Thomas
 And þere oure Ost' bigan his hors areste
 And seyde lordus herkenþ if' 3ow leste 828
 3e woot' 3oure forward and I it 3ou recorde
 If' euesong' and morwesong' acorde
 Let se now who schal telle ferst a tale
 As euere I moote drinke wyn or ale 832
 who-so be rebel to my Iuggement
 Schal paye for al þat' by the weye is spent
 Now draweth Cut/ er þat' we forther twynne
 which þat' hath þe schortest schal bygynne 836
 Sire knight' quop he maister and my lord [leaf 12]
 Now draweth Cut. for þat is myn acord
 Cometh ner quod he my lady prioresse
 And 3e sir Clerk lat' be 3our schamfastnesse 840
 Ne studieth nat ley hand to euery man
 Anon to drawen euery wight' bigan
 And schortly for to tellen as it' was
 were it by auenture or sort' or cas 844
 The soþ is þis the Cut fil to the knight'
 Of' which ful glad and bliþe was euery wight
 And telle he moste his tale as was resoun
 By forward and by composicioun 848
 As 3e han herd what needeþ wordes moo
 And whan þis goode man seigh þat it was so
 As he that' wys was and obedient'
 To kepe his forward by his fre assent' 852
 He seyde syn I schal bygynne the game

what welcome be þou cut. a goddus name
Now lat vs ryde and herkneþ what I seye
And with þat word we riden forþ oure weye 856
And he bigan with right a merie chere:
His tale. and seide right in þis manere.

[break of one line in the MS.]

WHilom as olde stories tellen vs [on leaf 12]
 Ther was a Duk^t þat highte Theseus 860
 Of^t Athenes he was. lord and gouernour
 And in his tyme swich a conquerour
 That^t gretter was ther non vnder þe sonne
 Ful many a Riche Contre hadde he wonne 864
 That^t with his wisdom and his chivalrie
 He conquered al the regne of^t Femynye
 That^t whilom was I-cleped Cithea
 And weddede the queen Ipolita 868
 And brought^t hire hoom with him in his Contre
 with moche glorie and gret^t solempnite
 And eek^t hire 3onge suster Emelye
 And þus with victorie and with melodye 872
 Lete I þis noble duk^t to Athenes ryde /
 And al his Ost^t in armes him biside [leaf 12, back]
 At^t certes if it nere to long^t to heere
 I wolde han told 3ow fully þe manere 876
 How wonnen was the regne of^t Femenye
 By Theseus and by his Chiualrye
 And of^t þe grete bataille for þe nones
 By-twix athenes. and amazones 880
 And how asegid was ypolita
 The faire hardy Quyen of Cithea
 And of^t þe feste that^t was at^t hire weddyng
 And of^t þe tempest^t at hire hoom comynge 884
 But al þat þing^t I most as now forbere
 I haue god wot^t a large feeld to Ere
 And wayke ben þe Oxen in my plough
 The remenaunt of the tale is long^t I-nough 888
 I wol not lette eek^t. non of^t al þis rowte

lat' euery felawe telle his tale aboute

And lat' see now who schal þe soper wynne 891

And ther I lafte I wolde agayn begynne

*[break of one line
in the MS.]*

This Duk' of' whom I make mencion

whan he was comen almost' vnto þe toun

In al his wele and in his moste pryde

he was war as he cast' his ey3e aside 896

wher þat' ther kneled in þe hye weye

A companye of' ladies tweye and tweye

Ech after other clad in cloþes blake

But' such a cry and such a woo þey make 900

That in þis world nys creature lyuyng

Ther herde such anoþer weymentynge

And of' þat' cry ne wolde þey neuer stenten

Til þey þe Reynes of' his bridel henten 904

what' folk' be 3e þat' at' myn hom comynge

Partourben so my feste with cryenge

Quod Theseus. haue 3e so gret' enuye

Of' myn honour þat' þus compleyne and crie 908

Or who hath 3ow mysboden or offendid

And telleþ me if' it' may ben amendid.

And why þat' 3e ben clad þus al in blak'

[leaf 13]

The oldest' lady of hem alle spak' 912

whan sche had swowned with a dedly chere

That it was routhe for to seen or heere.

And seyde lord to whom fortune hap 3euen

victorie and as a conquerour to luyen 916

Nough't' greueth vs 3oure glorie and honour

But we beseken mercy and socour

Haue mercy on oure woo and oure distresse

Som drope of' pitee thurgh 3oure gentillesse 920

Vppon vs wrecchede wommen lat' þou falle

For certus lord. ther nys noon of' vs alle

That' sche nath ben a duchesse or a queene

Now be we Caytifs as it is wel seene 924

Thanked be fortune. and hire false wheel

That noon estat^t assureth to ben weel
 And certus lord to abiden 3oure presence
¹Ther in þe temple of þe goddesse Clemence 928
 we han ben waytynge al þis fourtenight [¹ a later 'here' in margin]
 Now helpe vs lord syn it is in þy might
 I wrecche which þat^t wepe and waylle þus
 was whilom wyf^f to kyng^t Capaneus 932
 That starf^t at Thebes. cursed be þat^t day
 And alle we þat^t ben in þis array
 And maken alle þis lamentacioun
 we leften alle oure housbondes at þe toun 936
 whil þat^t þe sege. þer aboute lay
 And 3et þe olde Creon welaway
 That lord is now of thebes þe citee
 Fulfilde of Ire and of Iniquite 940
 He for despyt^t and for his Tyrannye
 To do þe deede bodyes vilonye
 Of alle oure lordes which þat ben I-slawe
 Hap alle þe bodies on an heep y-drawe 944
 And wol not^t suffren hem by noon assent^t
 Nother to ben y-buried nor I-brent^t
 But^t makeþ houndes ete hem in despite
 And with þat^t word withoute more respite 948
 They fillen gruf^t and criden pitously [leaf 13, back]
 haue on vs wrecched wommen som mercy
 And lat oure sorwe synken in thyn herte
 This gentil duke down from his courser sterte/ 952
 with herte pitous whan he herde hem speke
 him þoughte þat his herte wolde breke
 whan he seyh hem so pitous and so maat^t
 That whilom weren of so gret estat^t 956
 And in his armes he hem alle vp hente
 And hem confortep in ful good entente
 And swor his oth as he was trewe knight^t
 he wolde do so ferforþly his might 960
 vpon þe tyraunt Creon hem to wreke

That al þe poeple of grece scholde speke
 how Creon was of Theseus y-serued
 As he þat haþ his deth right wel deserued 964
 And right anoon wipoute eny abood
 his baner he desplayeþ and forþ rood
 To Thebes-ward, and al his oost bysyde
 No ner athenes wolde he go ne ryde 968
 Ne take his eese fully half a day
 But onward on his way þat nyght he lay
 And sente anoon ypolita þe queene
 And Emelye hir 3onge suster schene 972
 vnto the toun of athenes to dwelle
 And forth he ryt þer is no more to telle
The reede statue of mars with spere and targe
 So schyneþ in his white baner large 976
 That alle þe feeldes gliteren vp and down
 And by his baner was born his pynoun
 Of gold ful riche in which þer was I-bete
 The Minatour which þat he slough in Crete 980
 Thus ryt þis Duk þus ryt þis Conquerour
 And in his oost of Cheualrie þe flour
 Til þat he cam to Thebes and alighte
 Faire in a feeld wher as he þoughte to fighte / 984
 But shortly for to speken of þis þing
 with Creon which þat was of Thebes kyng
 He faught and slough him manly as a knight / [leaf 14]
 In pleyn bataille and putte his folk to flight / 988
 And by assaut he wan þe Cite aftur
 And rente down boþe wal and sparre and raftur
 And to þe ladies he restored agayn
 The bones of here housbondes þat were slayn 992
 To do exequies as was þo þe gyse
 But it were al to long for to deuyse
 The grete clamour and þe waymentynge
 which þat þe ladies made at þe brennyng 996
 Of þe bodyes and þe grete honour

That Theseus the noble conquerour
 Doth to þe ladyes whan þey from him wente
 But^t shortly for to telle is myn entente 1000
 whan þat þis worthy Duk^t þis Theseus
 hath Creon slayn and Thebes wonne þus
 Stille in þe feelde he took^t al night^t his reste
 And dide with al þe contre as him leste 1004
TO Ransake in þe cas of^t bodyes dede
 hem for to streepe of herneys and of wede /
 The pilours didnen businesse and cure
 After þe bataile and discomfiture 1008
 And so byfil þat in þe cas þei founde
 Thurg^h girt^t with many a greuous bloody wounde
 Two 3onge knighte liggyng^t by and by
 Boþe in oon armes clad ful richely 1012
 Of whiche two Arcite hight^t þat^t oon
 And þat^t opur knight^t hight^t Palamon
 Nat^t fully quyk^t ne fully deed þey were
 But^t by here coote armure and by here gere 1016
 Heraudes knewe hem wel in special
 As þey þat weren of^t the blood real
 Of Thebes and of^t Sistren tuo I-born
 Out^t of^t þe chaas þe pilours han hem torn 1020
 And han hem caried softe vnto þe tente /
 Of Theseus and ful sone he hem sente
 Tathenes for to dwellen in prisoun
 Perpetuelly he wolde no Raunceoun 1024
 And þis Duk^t whan he hadde þus I-doon [leaf 14, back]
 he took^t his host^t and hom he ryt^t anoon
 with laurer crowned as a conquerour
 And þere he lyueþ in Ioye and in honour 1028
 Terme of^t his lyf^t what^t wolle 3e wordes moo
 And in a tour in angwische and in woo
 This Palamon and his felawe arcite
 For euermo þer may no gold hem quyte 1032
 This passeþ 3eer by 3eer and day by day

Til it^t fel oones in a morwe of^t may
 That Emelie þat^t fairer was to seene
 Than is þe lilie on hire stalkes grene 1036
 And fresscher þan the may with floures newe
 For with þe rose colour strof^t hire hewe
 I not^t which was þe fyner of^t hem two
 Er it^t was day as sche was wont^t to do 1040
 Sche was arisen and al redy dight^t
 For may wole haue no sloggardye anygh^t
 The sesoun prikeþ euery gentil herte
 And makeþ him · out of^t his sleepe sterte 1044
 And seith arys and do þin obseruance
 This maked Emelye han remembrance
 To do honour to May and for to ryse
 I-cloped was sche fressh for to deuyse 1048
 hire ȝolwe heer was browdid in a tresse
 Byhynde hire bak^t aȝerde long^t I gesse
 And in the gardyn at þe sonne vpriste
 Sche walkeþ vp and down wher as hire liste 1052
 Sche gadereþ floures party whyte and reede
 To make a certeyn gerland for hire heede
 And as an aungel heuenly sche song^t
 The grete tour þat was so þikke and strong^t 1056
 which of^t þe castel was the cheef^t dongeoun
 Ther as þis knightes weren in prisoun
 Of^t which I tolde ȝow and telle schal
 was euene Ioynyng^t to þe gardeyn wal 1060
 Ther as þis Emely hadde hire pleyynge
 Bright^t was þe sonne and cleer þat^t morwenynge
 And Palamon þis woful prisoner [leaf 15]
 As was his wone-by leue of^t his gayler 1064
 was risen and romed in a Chambre on heigh^t
 In which he al þe noble cite seigh^t
 And eek^t þe gardeyn ful of^t braunches grene
 Ther as þe fresshe Emelye þe scheene 1068
 was in hire walk/ and romed vp and down

This sorweful prisoner þis Palamon
 Gooth in þe chambre romyng^t to and fro
 And to himself^t compleynyng^t of^t his woo 1072
 That^t he was born / ful ofte he seyde alas
 And so byfel by auenture or cas
 That^t þurgh a wyndow þikke and many a barre
 Of Iren greet^t and squar as eny sparre 1076
 he cast^t his eyen vpon Emelya
 And þer with al he bleynte and cryed .A.
 As þat^t he stongen were vnto þe herte
 And with þat^t crye arcite anon vp sterte 1080
 And seyde cosyn myn what^t eyleþ þe
 That^t art^t so pale and deedly for to see /
 why crydestow who hap þe doon offence
 For goddes loue tak^t al in pacience 1084
 Oure prisoun for it^t may non oþir be
 Fortune hap ȝeuen vs þis aduersite
 Som wikke aspect / or disposicioun
 Of Saturne by sum constellacioun 1088
 Hath ȝeuen vs þis alþough we hadde it sworn
 So stood þe heuen whan þat we were born
 we moste endure it þis is þe schort^t and pleyne
 This Palamon answered and seyde ageyn 1092
 Cosyn for sothe of^t þis opynyoun
 Thou hast^t a veyn ymaginacioun
 This prisoun caused me not^t for to crye
 But^t I was hurt^t right now þurgh myn yhe 1096
 Into myn herte þat^t wol my bane be
 The fairnesse of^t þe lady þat^t I see
 Ȝonde in þe gardyn rome to and fro
 Is cause of^t my cryyng^t and my wo 1100
 I not^t wheþur sche be womman or goddesse / [leaf 13, back]
 But^t Venus is it/ sothly as I gesse
 And þer with al on knees a doun he fil
 And seyde venus if it^t be ȝoure wil 1104
 Ȝow in þis gardyn þus to transfigure

Biform me sorwful wrecched creature
 Out' of þis prisoun help þat we may scape
 And if' so be oure destyne be schape 1108
 By eterne word to deyen in prisoun
 Of' oure lynage haueth sum compassioun
 That is so lowe y-brought by Tyrannye
 And with þat' word Arcite gan espye 1112
 wher as this lady romed to and fro
 And with þat' sight/ hire beaute hurt him so
 That' if' þat' Palamon was wounded sore
 Arcite is hurt' as moche as he or more 1116
 And with a sigh. he seyde pitously
 The freissche beaute sleeth me sodeynly
 Of' hir that rometh 3onder in þe place
 And but' I haue hir mercy and hir grace 1120
 That' I may see hir atte leste weye
 I nam but' deed / ther nys no more to seye
 This Palamon whan he tho wordes herde
 Dispitously he loked and answerde 1124
 whether seistow in earnest' or in pley
 Nay quop Arcite in earnest' in good fey
 God helpe me so me lust' ful euele pleye
 This Palamon gan knytte his browes tweye 1128
 Hit' nere quod he to the no gret honour
 For to be fals ne for to be traytour
 To me that' am thy cosyn and thy broþer
 I-swore ful deepe and ech of' vs to oþer 1132
 That' neuer for to deyen in þe payne
 Til þat' deeth departe schal vs twayne
 Neyþer of vs in lande to hynder other
 Ne in non other cas / my leue broþer 1136
 But' þou schuldest trewly forþer me
 In euery caas and I schal forþer þe /
 This was þyn othe / and myn eek' certayn [leaf 16]
 I wot' right' wel þou darst/ it' nat wiþsayn 1140
 Thus art' þou of' my counseil out' of' doute

And now thou woldest falsly ben aboute
 To loue my lady whom I loue and serue
 And euere schal vnto myn herte sterue 1144
 Now certes fals arcite þou schal not so
 I loued hir first / and tolde the my woo
 As to my counseil / and to broþer sworn
 To forthere me as I haue told biforn 1148
 For which thou art I-bounden as a knight
 To helpe me / if it lay in þi might /
 Or elles art þou fals I dar wel sayn
 This Arcite ful proudly spak agayn 1152
 Thou schalt quop he be rather fals þan I
 But þou art fals / I telle þe vttrily
 For paramour I loued hir first þen þow
 what wolt þou sayn thou wost it not 3it now 1156
 wheþer sche be a womman or goddesse
 Thyn is affeccioun of holynesse
 And myn is loue as of a creature
 For which I tolde þe myn aduenture 1160
 As to my cosyn / and my broþer sworn
 I pose þat þou louedest hire biforn
 wost þou nat wel the olde clerkes saw
 That who schal 3eue a loue eny lawe 1164
 loue is a grettere lawe by my pan
 Then may be 3eue / to eny erply man
 Therfore posityf lawe and such deere
 Is broke alway for love in ech degree 1168
 A man moot needes loue maugre his heed
 he may nought fle it þough he schulde be deed
 Al be sche mayde or be sche widewe or wyf
 And þat is nat likly al þy lyf 1172
 To stonden in hire grace no more schal I
 For wel þou wost þy seluen verrily
 That þou and I been dampned to prisoun
 Perpetually vs gayneth no Raunsoun 1176
 We stryue as doth the houndes for the boon [leaf 16, back]

They foughte alday and ȝit here part was noon
 Ther com a kyte whil þat þey were wrope
 That bar away the boon bitwixe hem bope 1180
 And þerfore at the kynges court my broþer
 Eche man for himself þer is non other
 Loue if the list for I loue and ay schal
 And sothly leue brother þis is al 1184
 Eke in þis prisoun moote we endure
 And euery of vs take his auenture
 Gret was the stryf and long bytwixe hem tweye
 Ȝif þat I hadde leysir for to seye 1188
 But to the effect it happed on a day
 To telle it ȝow as schortly as I may
 A worpy Duk þat highte Perotheus
 That felaw was to þe duk Theseus 1192
 Syn þilke day þat þey were children lyte
 Was come to Athenes his felawe to visite
 And for to pley as he was wont to do
 For in þis world he loued noman so 1196
 And he loued him as tendurly agayn
 So wel þey loued as olde bookes sayn
 That whan oon / was deed soply to telle
 his felawe wente and sought him down in helle 1200
 But of þat story lyst me nought to write
 Duk Perotheus loued wel Arcite/
 And hadde him knowe at Thebes ȝeer by ȝeer
 And fynally at requeste and prayer 1204
 Of Perotheus withoute any raunsoun
 Duk Theseus him leet out of prisoun
 Frely to go wher him lust ouer al
 In such a gyse as I ȝou telle schal 1208
 This was the forward playnly to endite
 Bitwixe Theseus and him Arcite
 That if so were þat Arcite were founde
 Euere in his lyf by daye night or stounde 1212
 In eny contre of þis Theseus

And he were caught it was acorded thus
 That with a swerd he scholde lese his heed [leaf 17]
 Ther nas noon oþer remedy ne reed 1216
 But took his leue and homward he him spedde
 Lete him be war his nekke lip to wedde
HOW gret a sorwe suffreþ now Arcite
 The deþ he feleþ þorugh his herte smyte 1220
 He weepeth weyleth cryeth pitously
 To slen himself he wayteþ pryuyly
 he seyde allas þe day þat I was born
 Now is my prisoun werse þan was biforn 1224
 Now is me schape eternally to dwelle
 Nought in purgatorie but in helle
 Allas þat euer knewe I Perotheus
 For elles had I dweld with Theseus 1228
 I-fetered in his prisoun for euere moo
 Than had I ben in blis and nat in woo
 Oonly þe sight of hir whom þat I serue
 þough þat I hir grace may nat deserue 1232
 wold han sufficed right ynough for me
 O dere Cosyn Palamon *quod* he
 þyn is þe victoire of þis auenture
 Ful blisfully in prisoun to endure 1236
 In prisoun nay certes but in paradys
 wel hath fortune y-torned þe dys
 That hap þe sight of hir and I the absence
 For possible is / syn þou hast hir presence 1240
 And art a knight a worþi and an able
 But by som cas syn fortune is chaungable
 Thou maist to þy desir somtyme atteyne
 But I that am exiled and bareyne 1244
 Of alle grace / and in so gret despeir
 That þer nys water erthe fyr ne eyr
 Ne creature that of hem makid is
 That may me helpe ne comfort in þis 1248
 wel ought I sterue in wanhope and distresse

Far wel my lyf and al my Iolynesse

Allas why playnen folk so in comune
Of purueance of god or of fortune 1252

That ȝeueth him ful ofte in many a gyse [leaf 17, back]

wel better þan þei can hemself deuyse

SOm man desireþ for to haue richesse
That cause is of his morthre/ or gret seeknesse 1256

And som man wolde out of his prisoun fayn

That in his hous is of his mayne slayn

Infinite harmes ben in þis mateere

we wote neuere what þing we preyen heere 1260

we faren as he þat dronke is as a mows

A dronke man wot wel he hap an hous

But he not nat which þe righte wey is þider

And to a dronke man þe wey is slider 1264

And certes in þis world so faren we

we seeken faste after felicite

But we gon wrong ful ofte trewely

Thus may we seyen alle and namely I 1268

That wende haue had a gret opinioun

That ȝif I mighte skape fro prisoun

Than had I be in ioie and parfyt hele

Ther now I am exiled fro my wele / 1272

Syn þat I may not se ȝow Emelye

I nam but deed ther nys no remedye

Vppon þat oper syde Palomon
whan he wiste þat arcite was agoon 1276

Such sorwe makeþ þat þe grete tour

Resowneth of his grete ȝollyng and clamour

The pure feteres of his schynes grete

weren of his bitter salte teres wete 1280

Allas *quod* he arcita cosyn myn

Of al oure strif god woot þe fruyt is þin

Thow walkest now in Thebes at þi large/

And of my woo þou ȝeuest litel charge/ 1284

Thou maiste seen þou hast wysdom and manhede

Assemble al þe folk' of oure kynrede
 And make a werre so scharpe in þis Cite
 That' by som auenture or by som trete 1288
 þou mayst/ hire wynne to lady and to wyf'
 For whom þat' I most' nedes leese my lyf'
 For as by wey of' possibilite [leaf 18]
 Syn þou art at' þi large of' prisoun free 1292
 And art' a lord gret is þin auantage
 More þan is myn þat' sterue here in a kage
 For I moot wepe and weyle whil I lyue
 with al þe woo þat prisoun may me 3yue 1296
 And eek' with peyne þat' loue me 3eueþ also
 And doubleþ al my peyne and al my wo
 Ther with þe fuyr of' Ielousye vpsterte
 wipinne his brest' and hent him by þe herte 1300
 So wodly / þat' lik' was he to by-holde
 The box tree or þe asschen deed and colde
 Tho seyde he O goddes cruel þat gouerne
 This world' with byndyng' & wiþ word eterne 1304
 And writen in þe table of' Athamaunte
 3oure parlement and 3oure eterne graunte
 what is mankynde more to 3ow holde
 Than is a scheep þat roukeþ in þe folde 1308
 For slayn is man right' as anoþer beste
 And dwelleþ eek' in prisoun and arreste
 And haþ seknesse and greet' aduersite
 And ofte tymes gilteles parde 1312
 what gouernaunce is in 3oure prescience
 That' gilteles tormenteþ Innocence
 And 3et encreceþ this al my penaunce
 That man is bounden to his obseruaunce 1316
 For goddes sake to letten of his wille
 Ther as a beste may al his lust' fulfille
 And whan a beste is deed he ne haþ no peyne
 But' man after his deth moot' wepe and pleyne 1320
 þough in þis world he haue care and woo

wipouten doute it may stonde so

The answer of þis I lete to diuinis

But wel I woot þat in þis world gret pyne is 1324

Allas I se a serpent or a þeeft

That many a trewe man haþ doon mescheef

Gon at his large and wher him lust may turne

But I moste be in prisoun þurgh saturne 1328

And eek þorugh Iuno Ialous and eke wood [leaf 18, back]

That haþ destruyed wel neyh al þe blood

Of Thebes wip his waste walles wyde /

And venus sleep me on þat oper syde / 1332

For Ielousye and fere of him Arcyte

Now wol I stynte of Palamon a lite

And lete him stille in his prisoun dwelle

And of arcita for þan wol I telle 1336

The somer passeþ and þe nightes longe

Encrescen double wise the peynes stronge

Bothe of þe lover and þe prisoner

I noot which hath þe wofullere cheer 1340

For schortly for to sey þis Palomon

Perpetuelly is dampned in prisoun

In cheynes and in feteres to be deed

And Arcite is exiled vpon his heed 1344

For eueremo as out of þat contre

Ne neuere mo schal he his lady see

Now louyeres / axe I þis question

who haþ þe worse Arcite or Palomon. 1348

That on may se his lady day by day

But in prisoun he moot dwelle alway

That oper may wher him lust ryde or go

But seen his lady schal he neuer mo 1352

Now deemeth as þou luste ȝe þat can

For I wol telle forþ as I bigan

Whan þat arcite to Thebes come was
 Ful ofte a day he swelde and seyde alas 1356
 For seen his lady schal he neuer mo
 And schortly to concluden al his wo
 So moche sorwe had neuer creature
 That is or schal whil þat þe world wol dure * 1360
 his sleep his mete his drynk^t is him by-raft^t
 That lene he wexe / and drye as eny schaft/
 his eyen holwe / grisly to biholde
 his hewe falwe and pale as asschen colde 1364
 And solitary he was and euer alone
 And dwellyng^t al þe night^t making his moone
 And if he herde song^t or Instrument/ [leaf 19]
 Then wolde he wepe he mighte nought^t be stent 1368
 So feble were his spirites and so lowe
 And chaunged so þat^t no man couþe knowe
 his speche noþer his vois þough men it herde
 And in his gir for al þe world he ferde 1372
 Nought^t oonly lyke þe louers maladye
 Of^t hercos but raþer lik^t manye
 Engendrud of^t humour malencolyk^t
 Byforne in his selle fantasyk^t 1376
 And schortly turned was al vp so down
 Bothe abytt^t and eek^t disposicioun
 Of^t him þis woful louere daun arcite
 what^t schulde I alway of^t his wo endite 1380
 whan he endured hadde a ȝeer or tuoo
 In þis cruel torment peyne and woo
 At^t Thebes in his contre as I seyde
 vpon a night^t in sleep as he him leyde 1384
 him þought^t þat how þe venged god mercurie /
 Byforn him stood and bad him to be murye
 his slepy ȝerd in hond he bar vp right^t
 An hat^t he wered vpon his heres bright / 1388

Arrayed was þis god as he took/ keepe
 As he was whan þat' Argous took' his sleep
 And seyde to athenes schalt' þou wende
 Ther is þe schapen of' þy wo an ende 1392
 And with þat' word arcite wook' and sterte
 Now trewely how sore þat me smerte
 Quod he to athenes riȝt' now wol I fare
 Ne for þe drede of' deth schal I not spare 1396
 To see my lady þat' I loue and serue
 In hire presence I recche nat to sterue /
 And with þat' word he caught' a gret myrour
 And saugh þat' chaunged was al his colour 1400
 And saugh his visage was in anoþer kynge
 And riȝht' anon it ran him into mynde
 That' seþpen his face was so disfigured
 Of' maladie the which he haþ endured 1404
 he mighte wel if' þat he bar him lowe [leaf 19, back]
 lyue in athenes eueremore vnknowe
 And see his lady wel neih day by day
 And riȝht' anon he chaunged his aray 1408
 And cloped him as a pore laborer
 And al alone saue oonly a squyer
 That' knew his pryuyte and al his cas
 which was disgysed pourely as he was 1412
 To athenes is he go þe nexte way
 And to þe court / he went vpon a day
 And at' þe ȝate he profred his seruyse
 To drugge and drawe what so men wolde deuyse 1416
 And schortly on þis matier for to seyn
 he fel in office with a Chambirleyn
 The which that' dwellyng' was with Emelye
 For he was wys and couthe sone aspye 1420
 Of' euery seruauunt which þat serued here
 wel coupe he hewe woode and water bere /
 For he was ȝonge and mighty for þe nones
 And þerto he was long' and bygge of' bones 1424

To doon þat eny wight can him deuyse
 A 3eer or two he was in þis seruise
 Page of þe chambre of Emelye þe bright
 And Philostrate he seide þat he hight 1428
 But half so wel byloued a man as he
 Ne was þer neuer in court of his degree
 he was so gentil of his condicioun
 That þoruh out al þe court was his renoun 1432
 They seyde þat it were a charite
 That Theseus would enhaunsen his degree
 And putten him in worschipful seruyse
 Ther as he might his vertu excersise 1436
 And þus wipinne a while his name spronge
 Boþe of his dedes and of goode tonge
 That Theseus haþ taken him so neer
 That of his Chambre he made him squyer 1440
 And 3af him gold to mayntene his degree
 And eek men brought him out of his countre
 From 3eer to 3er ful pryuyly his rente [leaf 20]
 But honestly and sleighly he it spente 1444
 That no man wondred how þat he it hadde
 And þre 3eer in þis wise his lyf he ladde
 And bar him so in pees and eek in werre
 Ther nas no man þat Theseus haþ so derre 1448
 And in þis blisse lete I now Arcite
 And speke I wole of Palomon alyte
IN derknes and orrible and strong prisoun
 This seuen 3eer haþ seten Palomoun 1452
 Forpyned what for woo and for destresse
 Who feleþ double sorwe and heuynesse
 But Palamon þat loue destreyneþ so
 That wood out of his witt he goþ for wo 1456
 And eek þerto he is a prisoner
 Perpetuelly nat oonly for a 3eer
 Who couþe ryme in englissch propurly
 His martirdam for-soþe it am nat .I. 1460

Therefore I passe as lightly as I may
 hit fel þat in þe seuene þe ȝeer in May
 The þridde niȝt as olde bookes seyn
 That al þis storie tellen more pleyne 1464
 were it by auenture or destene
 As whan a þing is schapen it schal be
 That soone aftur þe mydnyght Palamoun
 By helpyng of a freend brak his prisoun 1468
 And fleeth þe cite fast as he may goo
 For he had ȝiue drinke his gayler soo
 Of a clarre maad of certeyn wyn
 with nercotykes and opye of Thebes fyn 1472
 That al þat niȝt þough þat men wolde him schake
 The gayler sleep he mighte nouȝt awake
 And þus he fleeth as fast as euer he may
 The niȝt was schort and faste by þe day 1476
 That needes cost he moste himseluen hyde
 And til a groue ther faste besyde
 with dredful foot þan stalkeþ Palomoun
 For schortly þis / was his opynyoun 1480
 That in þat groue he wolde him hyde al day [leaf 20, back]
 And in þe niȝt þen wolde he take his way
 To Thebesward his frendes for to preye
 On Theseus to helpe him to werreye / 1484
 And shortelich or he wolde lese his lyf
 Or wynnen Emelye vnto his wyf
 This is peffect of his entente playn.
 Now wol I torne vnto Arcite agayn. 1488
 That litel wiste how nyh þat was his care
 Til þat fortune haþ broughȝ him in the snare
The busy larke messenger of May
 Salueþ in hire song þe morwe gray 1492
 And fyry Phebus ryseþ vp so bright
 That þe orient laugheþ of þe light
 And wiþ his stremes dryeþ in þe greues
 The siluer drops hongyng in þe leues 1496

And arcite þat is in þe court ryal
 With Theseus his Squyer principal
 Is risen and loketh on þe mery day
 And for to doon his obseruance to May 1500
 Remembryng of þe poynt of his desire
 he on his courser stertyng as þe fire
 Is riden in to feeldes him to pleye
 Out of þe court were it a myle or tweye 1504
 And to þe groue of which þat I 3ow tolde
 By auenture his wey he gan to holde
 To make him a garland of þe greues
 were it of woodewynde or hawþorn leues 1508
 And lowde he songt a3ens þe sonne scheene
 May wiþ al þyn floures and þy greene
 welcome be þou wel faire freissche may
 In hope þat I som grene gete may 1512
 And fro his courser wiþ a lusty herte
 Into þe groue ful lustily he sterte
 And in a pathe he romed vp and down
 Ther by auenture þis Palamoun 1516
 was in a busche þat no man might him see
 Ful sore afered of his deþ was he
 No þing ne knew he þat it was Arcite [leaf 21]
 God wot he wolde haue trowed it ful lite 1520
 But soþ is seyde goon ful many 3eres
 That feld haþ eyen and þe woode haþ eeres
 It is ful fair a man to bere him euene
 For al day men metep atte vnset steuene 1524
 Ful litel woot arcite of his felawe
 That was so neih to herken of his sawe
 For in þe busche he styntep now ful stille
 whan þat arcyte had romed al his fille / 1528
 And songen al þe Roundel lustily
 In to a studie he fel sodeynly
 As doþ þe louers in here queynte geeres
 Now in þe croppe / now down in þe breres 1532

Now vp now doun as boket in a welle
 Right^t as þe friday soply for to telle /
 Now it schyneþ now it^t reyneþ faste
 Right^t so gan gery venus ouercaste 1536
 The hertes of^t hire folk^t right^t as hir day
 Is grisful right^t so chaungeþ hire aray
 Selde is þe fryday al þe wyke I-like
 whan þat^t arcite hadde songe he gan to sike 1540
 And sette him doun wipouten eny more
 Alas *quod* he þat^t day þat^t I was bore
 how longe Iuno thurgh þy cruelte
 wiltow werreyen Thebes þe Citee 1544
 Allas I-brought^t is to confusioun
 The blood royal of^t Cadme and Amphioune
 Of^t Cadynus / þe which was þe furst^t man
 That^t Thebes bulde or first^t þe toun bygan 1548
 And of^t þat Cite first^t was crowned kyng^t
 Of^t his lynage / am I and his ofspring^t
 By verray line and of^t his stok^t ryal
 And now I am so caytyf^t and so þral 1552
 That^t he þat^t is my mortal enemy
 I serue him as his squyer pourely
 And 3et^t doth Iuno me wel more schame
 For I dar nough^t byknowe myn owne name 1556
 But^t þer as I was wont^t to hote arcite [leaf 21, back]
 Now hoote I Philostrate nou3^t worth a myte
 Allas þou felle mars allas Iuno
 Thus haþ 3oure Ire owre lynage fordo 1560
 Saue oonly me and wrecchid Palomoun
 That^t Theseus martyreþ in prisoun
 And ouer al this to slee me vtterly
 Loue haþ his fyry dart^t so brennyngly 1564
 I stykid þorough my trewe careful herte
 That^t schapen was my deth erst^t þan my scherte
 3e slen me with 3oure eyhen Emelye
 3e ben þe cause wherfore þat I dye 1568

Of al þe remenant of al myn oper care
 Ne sette I nouȝt þe mountaunce of a tare
 So þat I couþe do ouȝht to ȝoure pleasaunce
 And with þat word he fel down in a traunce 1572
 A longe tyme and aftirward vpsterte
 This Palamon þat þouȝte þurgh his herte
 he felt a cold swerd sodeynliche glyde
 For Ire he quook/ he nolde no lenger abyde 1576
 And whan þat he haþ herd arcites tale
 As he were wood wiþ face deed and pale
 he sterte him vp out of þe bussches pikke
 And seyde arcyte / false traitour wikke/ 1580
 Now art þou hent/ þat louest my lady so.
 For whom þat I haue al þis peyne and wo.
 And art my blood and to my counseil sworn
 And I ful ofte haue told þe heere byforn 1584
 And hast by-laped here þe duke Theseus
 And falsly chaunged hast þy name þus
 I wol be deed or elles þou schalt dye
 þou schalt not loue my lady Emelye 1588
 But I wil loue hire oonly and nomo
 For I am Palomon þy mortal fo
 And þough þat I no wepen haue in þis place
 But out of prisoun am y-stert by grace 1592
 I drede not þat oper þou schalt dye
 Or þou ne schalt not loue Emelye
 Chese which þou wilt for þou schalt not asterte [leaf 22]
 This arcite with ful despitous herte 1596
 whan he him knew and had his tale herde
 As fers as a lyoun pulleþ out a swerde
 And seide þus by god þat sitteþ aboue
 Nere it þat þou art sike and wood for loue 1600
 And eek þat þou no wepne has in þis place
 But out of prisoun art y-stert by grace
 That þou ne schuldest deyen of myn hond
 For I defye þe seurte and þe bond 1604

which þat þou seyst I haue maad to þe
 For verray fool / þenk þat loue is fre
 And I wol loue hire mawgre al þy might
 But for þou art a gentil parfizt knight 1608
 And wenest to dereyne hire by batayle
 haue heere my troupe to morwe I nyl not fayle
 wipouten wityng of eny oþer wight
 That heer I wol be founden as a knight 1612
 And bryngen harneys right I-nough for þe
 And ches þe best and lef þe worst for me
 And mete and drynke / þis night wil I bryng
 Inough for þe and cloþ for þy beddyng 1616
 And if so be þat þou my lady wyne
 And sle me in þis wood þat / I am Inne
 Thou maist wel haue þy lady as for me
 This Palomon answerþ I graunt it þe 1620
 And þus þey ben departed til a morwe
 whan ech of hem had leyd his feith to borwe
O Cupide / out of al charite
 O regne þat wolt no felaw haue with þe 1624
 Ful sob is seyde / þat loue ne lordschipe
 wol not his þonkes haue no felaschipe
 wel fynden þat arcite and Palamoun
 Arcite is riden anon to þe toun 1628
 And on þe morwe or it were day light
 Ful priuely two harneys haþ he dight
 Boþe sufficaunt and mete to darreyne
 The batayl in þe feeld betwix hem tweyne 1632
 And on his hors alone as he was born [leaf 22, back]
 he caryed al þis harneys him byforn
 And in þe groue at tyme and place I-sette
 This arcite and þis Palamon ben mette 1636
 Tho chaungen gan here colour in here face
 Right as þe honterus in þe regne of Trace
 That stondeþ in þe gappe with a spere
 whan honted is þe lyoun or þe bere 1640

And hereþ him / comyng^t in þe greues
 And brekeþ boþe þe bowes and þe leues
 And þenkeþ here comeþ my mortel enemy
 wiþoute faile he mot be deed or I 1644

For eyþer I mot^t slen him at^t þe gappe
 Or he moot slee me if^t it^t me myshappe
 So ferden þey in chaungyng^t of^t here hew
AS fer as eyþer of^t hem oþer knew 1648

Ther nas no good day ne no saluyng^t
 But^t streyt^t wiþouten wordes rehersyng^t
 Euery of^t hem helpeþ to armen oþer
 As frendly as he were his owen broþer 1652

And þanne wiþ / here scharpe speres stronge
 They foyneden ech at oþer longe
 Tho it semed þat^t þis Palomon
 In his fightyng^t were a wood lyoun 1656

And as a cruel tygre was arcite
 And as wilde boores gonne þey smyte
 That^t froþen white as fome froþe wood
 vp to þe ancle þey faught^t in here blood 1660

And in þis wise I lete hem figtyng^t well
 And forþere I wol of^t Theseus telle

The destyne mynistre general
 That^t excused in þe world ouer al 1664

The purueans þat^t god haþ seye byforn
 So strong^t it is þat þey þe world had sworn
 The contrary of^t a þing^t by 3e or nay
 3et som tyme it schal falle vpon a day 1668

That^t falleþ nought^t eft^t in a þousend 3eere
 For certeynly oure appetites heere

Be it of^t pees oþer hate or loue [leaf 23]
 Al is it reuled by þe sight^t aboute 1672

This mene I now by mighty Theseus
 That^t for to honte is so desirous
 And namely þe grete hert^t in May
 That^t in his bed þer daweth him no day 1676

That he nys clad and redy for to ryde
 with hont/ and horn and houndes him byside
 For in his hontyng^t haþ he such delyt
 That^t is his ioie and his appetyt 1680
 To been him self^t þe grete hertes bane
 For after may he serueþ now Dyane

Cleer was þe day as I haue told or þis
 And Theseus with alle Ioye and blys 1684
 with his ypolita þe fayre queene
 And Emelye cloped al in greene
 On hontyng^t be þay riden ryally
 And to þe groue þat^t stood þer faste by 1688

In which þer was an hert^t as men him tolde
 Duk^t Theseus þe streyte wey haþ holde
 And to þe launde he rydeþ him ful right^t
 There was þe hert^t y-wont^t to haue his flight 1692
 And ouer a brook^t and so forþ in his weye

This duk^t wol haue of him a cours or tweye
 wiþ houndes which as him lust^t to comaunde
 And whan þis Duk^t was come in to þe launde 1696
 vnder þe sonne he lokeþ right^t anon
 he was war of arcite and Palomon

That^t foughten breeme as it were boores tuo
 The brighte swerdes wente to and fro 1700

So hidously þat with þe leste strook^t
 It^t seemeþ as it wolde felle an Ook
 But^t what^t þey were noþing^t ȝit^t he woot
 This duk^t wiþ spores / his courser he smoot 1704

And at a stert^t he was bitwix hem tuoo
 And pullid out a sward and cride hoo
 Nomore vp peyne / of leesyng^t of ȝour heed
 By mighty mars anon he schal be deed 1708

That^t smyteþ eny strook^t þat^t I may seen [leaf 23, back]

But^t telleþ me what^t mestir men ȝe been
 That^t ben so hardy for to fighten heere
 wiþoute Iugge or oþer officere 1712

As it were in a lyste really
 This Palamon answerde hastily
 And seyde sire what nedep wordes mo
 we han þe deþ deserued boþe tuo 1716
 Tuo woful wrecches been we and kaytyues
 That ben encombred of oure owne lyues
 And as þou art a rightful lord and Iuge
 Ne ȝeue vs neyþer mercy ne refuge/ 1720
 But sle me first for seynte Charite
 But sle my felaw eek as wel as me
 Or sle him first for þough þou knowe him lyte
 This is þy mortal fo þis is arcite 1724
 þat fro þy lond is banyscht/ on his heed
 For which he hap I-serued to be deed
 For þis is he þat come to þi gate
 And seyde þat / he highte Philostrate 1728
 Thus hap he Iaped þe many a yer
 And þou hast maad of him þy cheef squyer
 And þis is he þat loueth Emelye
 For siþ þe day is come þat I schal dye 1732
 I make pleylnly my confessioun
 þat I am / þe woful Palamoun
 That hap þi prisoun broke wikkedly
 I am þy mortal foo and it am I 1736
 That louep so hoote / Emely þe bright
 That I wol dye present in hire sight
 Therefore I aske deep and my Iuwyse
 But slee my felaw in þe same wyse 1740
 For boþe we haue serued to be slayn
This worthy duk answerde anon agayn
 And seide þis is / a schort conclusioun
 ȝour owne mouþ by ȝour owne confessioun 1744
 hap dempned ȝou boþe / and I wil it recorde
 It needep nouȝt to pyne ȝow wiþ þe corde
 ȝe schul be deed by mighty mars þe reede
 The queen anon for verray wommanhede 1748

Gan for to wepe and so dede Emelye
 And alle þe ladies in companye
 Great' pite was it as it' þought' hem alle
 That euere such a chaunce schulde falle 1752
 For gentil men þei were and of' gret estate
 And noþing' but for loue was þis debate
 And saw here bloody woundes wyde and sore
 And alle þey cryde lesse and þe more 1756
 Haue mercy lord vpon vs wommen alle
 And on here bare knees anoon þey falle
 And wolde haue kissed his bare feet right as he stood
 Till atte laste aslaked was his mood 1760
 For pite rennep' sone in gentil herte
 And þough he for Ire quok' and sterte
 he haþ it al considered in a clause
 The trespas of' hem boþe and here cause 1764
 And al-þough' his Ire here gylt' accused
 3et' he in his resoun hem boþe excused
 And þus he þought' þat' euery maner man
 wol help himself' in loue if' þat he can 1768
 And eek' delyuer himself' out of' prisoun
 And eek' in his hert/ had compassioun
 Of' wommen for þey wepen euer in oon
 And in his gentil hert' he þought' anoon 1772
 And soply he to himself' seyde fy.
 vpon a lord þat' wol haue no mercy
 But' be a lyoun boþe in word in dede
 To hem þat' ben in repentaunce and drede 1776
 As wel as to a proud dispitious man
 That' wol maynteyne þat he first bigan
 That' lord haþ litel of' discrecioun
 That' in such caas can no diuisioun 1780
 But' wayteþ pride and humblenesse after oon
 And schortly whan his Ire is ouer gon
 He gan to loke on hem with eyen blake and light
 And spak' þese same wordes al in light 1784

The god of loue a benedicite [leaf 24, back]
 how mighty and how gret a lord is he
 Agayns his might^t þer gayneth non obstacle
 He may be cleped a god of his miracle 1788
 For he can maken at his owen gyse
 Of euery herte / as him lust^t deuysel
 Lo her is arcite and Palomon
 That quytelý / were out of my prisoun 1792
 And might^t haue lyued in Thebes ryally
 And witen I am here mortal enemy
 And þat^t here dep^t lith in my might also
 And 3et^t hap^t loue maugre here ey3en tuo 1796
 I-brought hem hider boþe for to dye
 Now lokep^t is nat þat^t an heih folye
 who may be a fole if þat he loue
 Byholde for goddes þap^t sitteþ aboue 1800
 Se how þey blede be þey nought^t wel arrayed
 Thus hap^t here lord þe god of loue hem payed
 here wages and here fees for here seruise
 And 3et^t wenen they to ben wise / 1804
 That^t seruen loue for ought^t þat may bifalle
 But^t þis is 3ette / þe beste game of alle
 That^t sche for whom þey haue þis Ielousye
 ¶ Can hem þefore as moche þank^t as me 1808
 Sche woot^t no more of al þis hoot^t fare
 By god þan wot^t a Cuckow or an hare
 But^t al moot^t ben assayed hoot^t or colde
 A man moot^t ben a fool oper 3ong^t or olde 1812
 I woot^t it by my self^t ful 3ore a-gon
 For in my tyme a seruant^t was I on
 And sythen þat^t I knewe of loues payne
 And wot^t how sore it can a man destreyne 1816
 As he þat^t hap^t often ben caught^t in his lace
 I 3ou for3eue holly þis trespace
 At þe request^t of þe queen þat kneleþ heere
 And eek^t of Emely my suster deere 1820

- And 3e schullen boþe anon vnto me swere
 That' neuer 3e schullen my corowne dere
 Ne make werre on me night' ne day [leaf 25]
 But be my freendes alle þat 3e may 1824
 I 3ou for3eue þis trespas euery dele
 And þey him swore his axyng' euery dele
 And him of' lordschip and of' mercy prayde
 And he hem graunted mercy and þus he sayde 1828
TO speke of' real lynage and riches
 Though þat' sche were a queen or a prynces
 Ilk' of' 3ow boþe is worþy douteles
 To wedde when tyme is but napeles 1832
 I speke as for my suster Emelye
 For whom 3e haue þis stryf' and Ielousye
 3e woot' 3oure self' sche may not' wedde two
 At' oones þough 3e faughten euer mo 1836
 That' oon of' 3ow or be him loth or leef'
 he may go pypen in an Iuy leef'
 This is to say sche may nough't haue boþe
 Al be 3e neuer so Ielous ne so loþe 1840
 Forþy I put' 3ou bothe in þis degre
 That' ilk' of' 3ou schal haue his destyne
 As him is schape / and herken in what' wyse
 Lo here 3our ende of' þat I schal deuyse 1844
My wil is þis. for playn conclusioun
 wiþouten eny repplicacioun
 If' þat' 3ou liketh tak' it' for þe best
 That' euery of' 3ou schal go wher him lest' 1848
 Frely wiþouten raunsoun or daungeer
 And þis day fyfty wykes fer ne neer
 Euerich of' 3ou schal bryng' an hundred knightes
 Armed for lystes vp at alle rightes 1852
 Al redy to derayne hir by batayle
 And þus byhote I 3ou wiþouten fayle
 vpon my trouthe and as I am a knight
 That' whepir of' 3ow boþe þat haþ might' 1856

- This is to seyn that' wheþir he or þou
 May wiþ his hundred as I spak' of' now
 Sle his contrary or out' of' lystes dryue
 Him schal I ȝeue Emelye to wyue 1860
 To whom þat fortune ȝeueþ so fair a grace [leaf 25, back]
 The lyste schal I make in þis place
 And god so wisly on my sowle rewe
 As I schal euen iuge ben and trewe 1864
 ȝe schul non opir ende wiþ me make
 That' oon of' ȝow schal be deed or take
 And if' ȝou þinkeþ þis is wel I-sayde
 Say ȝoure avys and holdeþ ȝow a-payde 1868
 This is ȝoure ende and ȝoure conclusioun
 who lokeþ lightly now but' Palamoun
 who spryngeþ vp for ioye but arcite
 who couþe telle or who couþe endite 1872
 The ioye þat is made in þis place
 whan Theseus haþ don so fair a grace
 But down on knees wente euery wight
 And þanked him with al here hertes might 1876
 And namely þe thebanes ofte siþe
 And þus wiþ good hope and herte bliþe
 They taken here leue and hom-ward þey ryde
 To Thebes / wiþ olde walles wyde 1880
 [.

 *no gap in the MS.*]
- A** Trow men wolde / it deme necligence
 If' I forȝete to telle þe dispence
 Of Theseus þat' goþ so busily
 To maken vp þe lystes rially 1884
 & such a noble theatre as it was
 I dar wel say þat' in þis world þer nas
 The circuite þer was a myle aboute
 walled of' stoon and dyched al wiþoute 1888
 Round was þe schap in maner of' compaas

Ful of degre þe height of sixty paas
 That whan a man was set in o degre
 he letted nought his felaw for to se 1892

Estward þer stood a gate of marbul whit
 westward such anoþer in opposit/
 And schortly to conclude such a place
 was non in erþe in so litel space 1896

In al þe lond þer nas no craftys man
 That geometry or arsmetrike can
 Ne purtreyour ne keruer of ymages [leaf 26]
 That Theseus ne ȝaf hem mete and wages 1900

The theatre for to maken and deuyse
 And for to don his right and sacrificise
 he Estward hap vpon þe gate aboue
 In worschip of venus goddes of loue 1904

Don make an auter and an oratory
 And westward in þe mynde and in memory
 Of mars he hap I-maked such an oper
 That coste largely of gold a foper 1908

And northward in a toret on þe walle
 Of alabaster whit and reed coralle
 An oratory riche for to see
 In worschip of Dyane goddes of chastite 1912

hath Theseus I-wrought in noble wise
 But ȝit/ had I forgeten to deuyse /
 The nobil keruyng and þe purtretures
 The schap þe contynaunce of þe figures 1916

That weren in þe Oratories þre
Furst in þe temple of venus þou may se
 wrought in þe wal ful pitous to byholde
 Thre broken slepes and þe sykes colde 1920

The sacred teeres and þe waymentyng
 The fuyry strokes and þe desiryng
 That loues seruauntz in þis lyf enduren
 The othes þat by her couenantz assuren 1924

Plesance and hope desyr fool-hardynesse

Beaute and ȝouȝe baudery and richesse Charmes and sorcery lesynges and flatery Dispense busynes and Ielousy	1928
That werud of ȝolo guldes a gerland And a cukkow sitting on hire hand Festes instrumentȝ carols and daunces Lust and array and al þe circumstaunces / Of loue which I rekned and reken schal Ech by oþer / were peynted on þe wal And mo þan I / can make of mencioun For sothly al þe mount of Setheroun	1932
Ther Venus hath hir principal dwellyng was schewed on þe wal here portrayng wiþ alle þe Gardyn and al þe lustynes Nought was forȝete þe porter ydelnes Ne Narcisus þe fayr of ȝore agon Ne ȝet þe foly of kyng Salomon Ne eek þe strengþe / of him hercules Thenchaumentȝ of Medea and Cerces Ne of turnus of which þe hard fuyry corage The riche Cresus caytif in seruage Thus may we see þat wisdom and riches Beaute ne sleight strengþe ne hardynes Ne may wiþ venus holde champartye For as sche lust þe world þan may sche gye lo al þis folk I-caught were in hire trace Til þay for wo fuloften sayde allas Sufficeþ þis ensample oon or tuo And þough I couþe reken a þousend mo The statu of venus glorious for to see was naked fletyng in þe large see And fro þe nauel down al couered was with wawes grene as bright as eny glas A citole in hire right hond hadde sche And on hir heed ful semely on to see A rose garland ful swete and wel smellyng	1936 [leaf 26, back] 1940 1944 1948 1952 1956 1960

And abouen hire heed dowues fleyng'	
Biforn hir stood hir sone Cupido	
vpon his schuldres were wynges two	1964
And blynd he was as it' is often seene	
A bowe he bar and arwes fair and greene	
W hy schuld I nouȝt' as wel telle ȝou alle	
The portraiture þat' was vpon þe walle	1968
wiþ in þe temple of' mighty mars þe reede	
Al peynted was þe wal in lengþ and breede	
loke to þe Estres of' þe grisly place	
That' highȝt' þe gret' tempul of' mars in trace	1972
In þat' colde and in þat' frosty regioun	
Ther as mars haþ his souereyn mancioun	
First' on þe wal was peynted a foreste	[leaf 27]
In which þer dwelled neyther man ne beste /	1976
wiþ knotty knarry bareyn trees olde	
Of' stubbes scharpe and hidous to byholde	
In which þer ran as wymbul in a swough	
As it' were a storme schuld berst' euery bough	1980
And downward on an hil vnder a bent /	
Ther stood þe tempul of' marcȝ armypotent /	
wrought' al of' burned steel of' which þentre	
was long' and streyt' and gastly for to see	1984
And þer out/ came a rage of' suche aprise	
That' it' maad al þe gates for to rise	
The norþen light' in at' þe dore schon	
For wyndow on þe walle was þer noon	1988
Thorough þe which men might' no light discerne	
The dores wer alle. ademauntȝ eterne	
I-clenched ouer thward and endelong/	
with Iren tough / and for to make it' strong'	1992
Euery piler þe tempul to susteene	
was tonne greet of' Iren bright and schene	
Ther saugh I furst' þe derk' ymaginyng'	
Of' felony and al the compassyng'	1996
The cruel Ire as reed as eny gleede	

3et' was here deth depeynted þer byfoin
 By manasyng' of' marc3 right' by figure
 So was it schewed right' in þe purtreture 2036
 As is depeynted in sterres aboue
 who schal be slayn or elles deed for loue
 Sufficeþ oon ensample in stories olde

[A break of one line in the MS.]

The statue of' mars vpon a carte stood
 Armed and loked grym as he were wood
 And ouer his heed þer schyneþ two figures
 Of' sterres þat been cleped in scriptures 2044
 That oon puella þat' oþur Rubius
 This god of' armes was arayed þus
 A wolf' þer stood byforn him at his feet
 wiþ eyen reed and of' a man he eet 2048
 wiþ sotyl pencil depeynted was þis storie
 In redoutyng' of' mars and of' his glorie

Now to þe temple of' Dyane þe chaste
 As shortly as I can I wol me haste 2052
 To telle 3ou al þe descripcioun

Depeynted ben þe walles vp and down
 Of' huntyng' and of' schamefast' chastite
 Ther saugh I how woful Calystope / 2056
 whan þat Dyane was agreued with here [leaf 28]
 was turned from a womman to a bere

And after was sche maad þe loode-sterre
 Thus was it peynted I can say no ferre 2060
 hire son is eek' aftir as men may see

Ther saw3 I dyane turned in til a tree
 I mene nou3t' þe goddes Dyane
 But' Peneus dou3ter / þe whiche hight dane 2064

Ther saugh I attheon an hert' I-maked
 For vengeance þat' he saugh Dyane al naked
 I saugh how þat his houndes han him caught'
 And freten him for þat' þey knew him naught 2068
 3it' I-peynted was a litel forþer more

how atthalaunce huntyd þe wilde bore
 And Melyagre / and many anoþer mo
 For which Dyane wrought him care and woo 2072
 Ther saugh I eek many anoþer story
 The which me list not drawe in to memory
 This goddess son / an hert ful hy he seet
 with smale houndes at hire feet 2076
 And vnder-neþe hir feet sche had þe moone
 wexyng it was and schulde wane soone
 In gaude greene hire statue cloped was
 wiþ bowe in hande and arwes in a cas 2080
 hir eyzen caste sche ful lowe adoun
 Ther Pluto haþ his derke regioun
 A womman trauailyng was hire biforn
 But for hire child so longe was vnborn 2084
 Ful pitously lucyna gan she calle
 And seyde help / for þou mayst best of alle /
 wel couþe he peynte lyfly þat it wrouȝt
 wiþ many a floren he þe hewes bought 2088
 Now been þise listes maad and Theseus /
 That at his grete cost arayed þus
 The temples and þe Theatres euery del
 whan it was don it liked him right wel 2092
 But stynt I wil of Theseus a lite
 And speke of Palomon and of Arcite
THe day approch of her attournyng [leaf 28, back]
 That euery schuld an hundred kniȝtes bryng 2096
 The batail to derreyne as I ȝou tolde
 And til athenes her couenant to holde
 hath euery of hem brouȝt an .C. knyghtes
 wel armed for þe werre at alle rightes 2100
 -And sikerly þer trowed many a man
 That / neuer sippen þat þis world bigan
 For to speke of knighthod of her hond
 As fer as god haþ makid see or lond 2104
 Nas of so fewe so good a company

For euery wight þat loueþ chyualry
 And wold his þankes haue a passant name
 he preyed þat he might be of þat game 2108
 A wel was him þat þerto chosen was
 For if þer felle to morwe such a caas
 I knowe wel þat euery lusty knight/
 That loueþ paramours and hath his might 2112
 were it in Engelond or elles where /
 They wold here þankes wilne to be þere
 To fight for / a lady benedicite
 It were a lusty sighte for to see 2116
 And right so ferden þey with Palomon
 wiþ him þer wente knyghtes many oon
 Some wol ben armed in an haburgoun
 In a bright brest plat and a gypoun 2120
 And som wold haue a peyre plates large
 And som wold haue a prys scheld or a targe
 Som wol been armed on here legges weel
 And haue an ax and eek a mace of steel 2124
 Ther nys no newe gyse þat it nas old
 Armed were þey as I haue told
 Euerich after his owen opinioun
Ther maistow se comyng wiþ Palomoun 2128
 ligurge himself þe grete kyng of Trace
 Blak was his berd and manly was his face
 The cercles of / his eyen in his heed
 They gloweden bytwixe ȝolw and reed 2132
 And lik a griffoun loked he aboute [leaf 29]
 with kempe heres on his browes stowte
 his lymes greet his brawnes hard and stronge
 his schuldres brood his armes rounde and longe 2136
 And as þe gyse was in his contre
 Ful heye vpon a chare of gold stood he
 wiþ foure white boles in a trays
 In stede of cote armour in his harnays 2140
 wiþ nayles ȝolwe and bright as eny gold

he had a bere skyn cole-blak^t for old
 his lange heer y-kempt^t byhynd his bak^t
 As eny rauen fether it schon for blak^t 2144
 A wreþe of^t gold arm-gret^t and huge of^t wight/
 Vpon his heed set^t ful of^t stoones bright
 Of^t fyne rubeus and of^t fyn dyamaunt³
 Aboute his chare wente with white alaunt³ 2148
 Twenty and mo as grete as eny stere
 To hunt at^t þe lyoun or at^t þe bere
 And folwed him with mosel fast^t I-bounde
 Colerd of^t gold and torett³ fyled rounde 2152
 An hundred lordes had he in his route
 Armed ful wel wiþ hertes stern and stoute
With arcita in stories as men fynde
 The gret^t Emetreus þe kyng^t of^t ynde 2156
 Vppon a steede bay trapped in steel
 Couered wiþ cloþ and of^t gold dyapred wel
 Cam rydyng^t lyk^t / þe god of^t armes mars
 his coote armour was of^t a cloþ of^t Tars 2160
 Cowched of^t perlys whyte round and grete
 his sadil was of^t brend gold newe bete
 A mantelet vpon his schuldre hangyng
 Bret-ful of Rubies reed and fir sparcyng 2164
 His crispe her lik^t rynges was I-ronne
 And þat^t was 3alwe and gliteryng^t as þe sonne
 his nose was heigh his eyen were cytryne
 His lippes rounde his colour was sangwyn 2168
 A fewe freknes in his face y-spreynd
 Betwixe 3olwe and somdel blak^t y-meynd
 And as a lyoun he his loking^t caste [leaf 29, back]
 Of fyue and twenty 3eer his age I caste 2172
 his berd was wel bygonne for to sprynge
 His voys was as a trumpe thunderynge
 vpon his heed he wered a laurer grene
 A garlond freisch and lusty for to serie 2176
 vpon his hond he bar for his delyt

An Egle tame as eny lylye whyt
 An hundred lordes had he with him þer
 Al armed sauf here hedes in here ger 2180
 Ful richely in alle maner þinges
 For trusteþ wel þat dukes Erles kynges
 were gadred in þis noble companye
 For loue and for eneres of Chiualrye / 2184
 Aboute þe kyng' þer ran on euery part
 Ful many a tame lyoun and lepart
 And in þis wise þis lordes alle and some
 Been on the sonday to þe cite kome 2188
 Aboute prime and in þe toun alight
 This Theseus þis duk' þis worþy knight
 whan he had brought' hem in to þis cite
 And ynned hem euerich at' his degre 2192
 he festep hem and doþ so gret labour
 To esen hem and do hem al honour
 That 3it' men wene þat' no mannes wyt/
 Of non estat' þat' cowde amenden it/ 2196
 The mynstralcye þe seruyce at þe feste
 The grete 3iftes to þe most' and leste
 The riche aray of Thebes his paleys
 Ne who sat' first' ne last' vpon þe deys 2200
 what ladies fayrest' ben or best' daunsyng'
 Or which of' hem can daunce best' or syng'
 Ne who most' felyngly spekep of loue
 what' haukes sitten on þe perche aboue 2204
 what' houndes lyen in þe floor a-doun
 Of al þis make I now no mencion
 But of þeffect' þat' þinkeþ me þe beste /
 Now comth þe poynt' and herkneth if' 3ou leste 2208
 The sonday night' or day bigan to springe [leaf 30]
 when Palomon þe larke herde synge
 Al þough it' were nought' day by houres tuo
 3it sang' þe larke and Palomon also / 2212
 with holy herte and with an heih corage

He roos to wenden on his pilgrymage
 Vnto þe blisful Cithera benigne
 I mene Venus honorable and digne 2216
 And in here hour he walkeþ forþ a paas
 Vnto þe lystes þer hir temple was
 And doun he kneleþ and wiþ humble cheer
 And her sore and seide as 3e schal heer 2220
FAirest! O fairest / O lady myn Venus
 Doughter of Ioue and spouse to Vlcanus
 Thou glader of þe mount/ of Citheroun
 For þilke loue þou haddest! to adeoun 2224
 haue pite on my bitter teeres smerte
 And tak! myn humble prayer to þin herte
 Allas I ne haue no langage for to telle
 Theffectes ne þe tormentz of myn helle 2228
 Myn herte may myn harmes nat bewreye
 I am so confus þat I may not seye
 But mercy lady bright þat knowest wel
 My þought! and felest! what harm þat I fel 2232
 Consider al þis and rew vpon my sore
 As wisly as I schal for euermore /
 Enforce my might! þi trewe seruant! to be
 And holde werre alday wiþ chastite 2236
 That! make I myn avow so 3e me helpe
 I kepe nat of! armes for to 3elpe
 Ne nat! I aske to morn to haue victorie
 Ne renoun in þis caas ne Veyne glorie 2240
 Of! pris of! armes blowyng! vp and doun
 But! I wolde haue ful possessioun
 Of! Emelye and dye in þi seruise
 Fynd þou þe maner how and in what! wyse 2244
 I recche nat! but! it! may better be
 To haue victorie of! him or he of! me
 So þat! I haue my lady in myn armes [leaf 30, back]
 For þough so be þat! mars be god of armes 2248
 And 3e be venus þe goddes of! loue

3oure vertu is so gret^t in heuen aboue
 Thy temple wol I worschipe euermo
 And on þin auter wher I ryde or go 2252
 I wol do sacrifice and fyres beete
 And if^t 3e wol nat^t so my lady sweete
 Than pray I þe to morwe with a spere
 That^t arcita me þurgh the herte bere / 2256
 Thanne rekke I nat^t whan I haue lost^t my lyf^t
 Though^t þat^t arcite haue hir to his wyf^t
 This is þeffect/ and ende of^t my prayeere
 3if^t me my love my blisful lady deere 2260
 whan thorisoun was doon of^t Palomon
 his sacrifice he dede and þat anoon
 Ful pitously with alle circumstances
 Al telle I nat^t as now his obseruances 2264
 But^t at^t þe last^t þe statu of^t venus schook^t
 And made a signe wherby þat he took^t
 That^t his prayer accepted was þat^t day
 For þough þe signe schewed a delay 2268
 3et^t wist^t he wel þat graunted was his boone
 And wiþ glad herte he went^t him hom ful soone
The þrid hour in equal þat^t Palomon
 Bigan to Venus temple for to goon 2272
 vp roos þe sonne and vp roos Emelye
 And to þe temple of^t Dian gan sche hye
 Hir maydens þat^t sche wiþ hir þider ladde
 Ful redily wiþ hem þe fyr þey hadde 2276
 Thencens / þe cloþes and þemenant al
 That to þe sacrifice longen schal
 The hornes ful of^t meth as is þe gyse /
 Ther lakkeþ nouȝt^t to do here sacrificise 2280
 Smokyng^t þe temple ful of^t cloþes faire
 This Emelye wiþ herte debonaire
 Hir body wessch wiþ wtir of^t a welle
 But how sche dide I ne dar nat^t telle 2284
 But^t it be eny þing^t in general

[leaf 31]

And ȝet it were a game to here it al
 To him þat meneth wel it were no charge
 But it is good a man be at his large 2288
 hir brighte her was kempt vntressed al
 A Corone of a grene Ok cerial
 vpon hir heed was set ful fair and meete
 Tuo fyres on þe auter gan sche beete 2292
 And did hir þinges as men may biholde
 In state of Thebes and þe bokes olde
 whan kynled was þe fyre wiþ pitous cheere /
 vnto Dyan sche spak as ȝe may heere 2296
O chaste goddes of þe woodes greene
 To whom boþe heuen and erþe and see is seene
 Queen of þe regne of pluto derk and lowe
 Goddes of maydenes þat myn hert has knowe 2300
 Ful many a ȝeer / ȝe woot what I desire
 As keep me fro þe vengans of þilkt yre
 That atheon aboughte trewely
 Chaste goddesse wel wost þou þat I 2304
 Desire to ben a mayden al my lyf
 Ne neuer wol I be no loue ne wyf
 I am ȝit þou wost of þi company
 A mayden and loue huntynge and venery 2308
 And for to walken in þe woodes wylde
 And nought to ben a wyf and be with chylde
 Nouȝt wol I knowe þe company of man
 Now helpe me lady syþnes ȝe may and kan 2312
 For þe formes þat þou hast in þe
 And Palomon þat haþ such loue to me
 And eek arcite þat loueþ me so sore
 This grace I praye þe wiþouten more 2316
 And sende loue and pees betwix hem two
 And fro me torne a wey here hertes so
 That al here hoote loue and here desire
 Al here besy torment and al here fyre 2320
 Be queynt or turned in anoþer place

And if so be þou wol do me no grace
 Or if my destyne be schapid so [leaf 31, back]
 That I schal needes haue on of hem two 2324
 So send me him þat most desireþ me
 Biholde goddes of clene chastite
 The bitter teeres þat on my cheekes falle
 Syn þou art mayde and keper of vs alle 2328
 My maydenhode þou kepe and wel conserue
 And whil I lyue a mayde I wil þe serue /
The fyres bren vpon þe auter cleer
 whil Emelye was in hire preyer 2332
 But sodeinly sche saugh a sighte queynt
 For right anon on of þe fyres queynt
 And quyked agayn and after þat anon
 That oper fyr was queynt and al a-gon 2336
 And as it queynt it made a whistelyng
 As doþ a wete brond in his brennyng
 And at þe brondes end out ran anoon
 As it were bloody dropes many oon 2340
 For which so sore agast was Emelye
 That sche wel neih mad was and gan to crie
 For sche ne wiste what it signified
 But oonely for feere þus sche cryed 2344
 And wepte þat it was pite to heere
 And þer-wip-al Dyane gan appeere
 wip bow in hond right as a hunteresse
 And seyde a doughter stynt þyn heuynesse 2348
 Among þe goddes hye it is affermed
 And by eterne word write & confermed
 Thou schalt be wedded vnto oon of þo
 That haue for þe so moche care and wo 2352
 But vnto which of hem may I nat telle
 Far wel for I may her no lenger dwelle
 The fyres which þat on myn auter bren
 Schuln þe declare or þat þou go hen 2356
 Thyn aduenture of loue and in þis caas

And wiþ þat word þe arwes in þe caas
 Of þe goddesse clatren faste and ryng
 And forþ sche went and made a vanysschyng 2360
 For which this Emelye astoneyd was [leaf 32]
 And seide what amounteþ þis allas
 I put me vnder þy proteccioun
 Dyane and in þi disposicioun 2364
 And hoom sche goþ anon þe nexte way
 This is þeffect/ þer nys no mor to say
The nexte houre of mars folwyng þis 2368
 Arcite to þe temple walkyd is /
 To fyry mars to doon his sacrificise /
 with al þe rightes of his payen wise
 with pitous herte and heih deuocioun
 Right thus to mars he sayd his orisoun 2372
 O stronge god þat in þe reynes cold
 Of trace honoured and lord art þou hold
 And hast in euery regne and euery land
 Of armes al þe bridel in þy hand 2376
 And hem fortunest as þe lust deuysel
 Accept/ of me my pitous sacrificise
 If so be þat my ȝouthe may deserue
 And þat my might be worþi to deserue 2380
 Thy godhed þat/ I may be on of þine
 Then pray I þe / to rewe on my pyne
 For þilke peyne and þat hoothe fuyre
 The which whilom þou brendest for desyre 2384
 whan þat þou vsedest þe gret bewte
 Of faire freissche Venus þat is so free
 And haddest hir in armes at þy wille
 And þough þe ones on a tyme mysfille 2388
 whan Vleanus had caught þe in his laas
 And fand þe liggyng by his wyf allaas
 For þilke sorwe þat was in þin herte
 haue reuthe as wel vpon my peynes smerte 2392
 I am ȝong and vnkonnyng as þou wost

And as I trowe / wiþ loue offendid most /
 That euer was eny lyues creature /
 For sche þat doth me / al þis wo endure 2396
 Ne rekkeþ neuer wheþer I synke or flete
 And wel I woot or sche me mercy heete
 I moot wiþ strengþe wyn hir in þe place [leaf 32, back]
 And wel I wot / wiþouten help or grace 2400
 Of þe / ne may my strengthe nought auayle
 Then help me lord to morn in my batayle
 For þilke fyr that whilom brende þe
 As wel as þis fire now brenneþ me 2404
 And do to morn þat I haue þe victorie
 Myn be þe trauail al þin be þe glorie
 Thy souerein tempul wol I most honouren
 Of any place / and al way most labouren 2408
 In þy plesaunce / and þy craftes strong
 And in þy tempul I wol my baner hong
 And alle þe armes of my companye
 And euermore vnto þat day I dye 2412
 Eterne fyr I wol bifore þe fynde
 And eek to þis / avow I wol me bynde
 My berd myn heer þat hangeth longe a doun
 That neuer ȝit ne felt offensioun 2416
 Of rasour ne of schere I wol þe ȝiue
 And be þy trewe seruaunt whiles I lyue
 lord haue rowþe vpon my sorwes sore
 ȝif me þy victorie I aske no more 2420
The preyer stynt / of Arcita þe strange
 The rynges on þe tempul dore þat hange
 And eek the dores clatereden ful fast
 Of which arcita som what was agast 2424
 The fires brenden on þe auter bright
 That it gan al þe tempul for to light
 A swote smel anon þe ground vp ȝaf
 And arcita anon his hand vp haf 2428
 And more encens in to þe fyr ȝet cast

with opir rightes and þan atte last^t
 The statu of^t mars bigan his hauberk^t ryng^t
 And with þat^t soun / he herd a murmuring^t 2432
 Ful lowe and dym / and sayde þis victorie
 For which he ȝaf^t to mars honour and glorie
 And þus with ioye and hope wel to fare^t
 Arcite anoon / vnto his Inne is fare / 2436
 As fayn as foul is of^t þe brighte sonne [leaf^{ss}]
 And right^t anon such stryf^t is bygonne
 For þat graunting^t in þe heuen aboue
 Bitwix venus and þe goddes of^t loue 2440
 And marcz þe sterne god armypotent^t
 That^t Iupiter was busy it^t to stent^t
 Til þat^t þe pale Saturnes þe colde
 That knew so many of^t auentures olde 2444
 Fond in his experiens an art/
 That^t he ful sone haþ plesyd euery part^t
 And soþ is sayd eelde haþ gret^t auantage
 In eelde is boþe wisdom and vsage 2448
 Men may þe eelde at^t-ren but nat^t at^t-rede
 Saturne anon to stynte stryf^t and drede
 Al be it^t þat^t / it^t be agayns his kynde
 Of^t al þis stryf^t he can remedy fynde 2452
 My deere douȝter venus *quod* Satourne
 My cours þat haþ so wyde for to tourne
 haþ more power þan woot^t eny man
 Myn is þe drenchyng^t in þe see so wan 2456
 Myn is þe prisoun in þe derke cote
 Myn is þe stranglyng^t & hangyng^t by þe þrote
 The murmur and þe cherles rebellyng^t
 The groynyng^t and þe pryue enpoysonyng^t 2460
 I do vengeance and pleyn correctioun
 whiles I dwelle in þe signe of^t þe lyoun
 Myn is þe ruen of^t þe hihe halles
 The fallyng^t of^t þe toures and þe walles 2464
 Vpon þe mynour or þe Carpenter

I slowh Sampson in schakyng^t þe piler
 And myne ben þe maladies colde
 The derke tresoun and þe castes olde 2468
 Myn lokyng^t is þe fadir of^t pestilens
 Now wepe nomore I schal do my diligence
 That^t Palomon þat is myn owen knight^t
 Schal haue his lady as þou him bihight 2472
 þow marc3 schal kepe his kni3t 3et^t neuerþeles
 Bitwixe 3ou þer moot som tyme be pees
 Al be 3e nou3t of^t oo complexioun [leaf 33, back]
 That^t ilke day causeþ such diuisioun 2476
 I am þi ayel redy at^t þy wille
 wepe þou no more I wol þi lust^t fulfille
 Now wol I stynt^t of^t þe goddes aboue
 Of^t mars and of^t venus goddes of^t loue 2480
 And telle 3ou as plainly as I can
 The grete effecte for þat^t I bigan
 [.

 no gap in the MS.]

GRet^t was þe fest^t in Athenus þat^t day
 And eek^t þat^t lusty sesoun of^t þat^t may 2484
 Made euery wi3t^t to ben in such plesaunce /
 That^t al the monday iousten þey and daunce
 And spende hit^t in venus heigh seruise /
 But^t by þe cause þat^t þey schuln arise 2488
 Erly a morwe for to see þat^t fight^t
 vnto þeir rest^t wente þey at^t nyght^t
 And on þe morwe whan þe day gan spryng^t
 Of^t hors and hernoys noyse and clateryng^t 2492
 Ther was in þe oostes al aboute
 And to þe paleys rood þer many a route
 Of^t lordes vpon steede and on/palfreys
 Ther mayst^t þou see deuysyng^t of^t herneys 2496
 So vncowþ and so riche wrought^t & wel
 Of^t goldsmithry of^t browdyng^t and of^t steel

The scheldes bright / testers and trappures
 Gold-beten helmes / hauberks and cote armures 2500
 lordes in paramenz on her coursers
 knightes of retenu and eek squyers
 Rayhyng^t þe speres and helmes bokelyng^t
 Girdyng^t of^t scheeldes wiþ layneres lasyng^t 2504
 Ther as need is / þey were noþing^t ydel
 Ther fomen steedes on þe golden bridel:
 Gnawyng^t and faste / armurers also
 with fyle and hamer prikyng^t to and fro 2508
 zemen on foote / and knaues many oon
 wiþ schorte staues as þikke as þey may goon
 Pypes trompes nakers and Clariounes
 þat^t in þe batail blewe bloody sownes / 2512
 The paleys ful of^t pepul vp and down [leaf 34]
 heer þre / þer / ten / haldyng^t her questioʒn
 Dyuynyng^t of^t þis Thebens knightes two
 Som seyden þus / som seyð it^t schal be so 2516
 Som heelde with him with þe blake berd
 Som wiþ þe ballyd som wiþ þikke hered
 Som sayð he loked grym as he wold fight^t
 he haþ a sparth of^t .xx.^{ti} pound of^t wight 2520
 Thus was þe halle ful of^t deuynyng^t
 Lang^t after þat^t þe sonne gan to spryng^t
 The gret^t Theseus / þat^t of^t his sleep is awaked
 with menstralecy and noyse þat^t was maked 2524
 held 3it^t þe chambre of^t his paleys riche
 Til þat^t Thebanes knyȝtes boþe I-liche
 honoured weren and in to Paleys fet
 Duk^t Theseus was at^t a wyndow set 2528
 Arayed right^t as he were god in trone
 The pepul preseth þider was ful sone
 him for to seen / and doon him reuerence
 And eek^t herken his hest^t and his sentence 2532
 An herowd on a skaffold made a hoo
 Til al þe noyse of^t þe pepul was I-doo

And whan he sawh þe pepul of noyse al stille
Thus schewed he þe mighty dukes wille 2536

The lord hap of his heih discrecioun
Considered þat it were destruccioun
To gentil blood to fighten in þis wise
Of mortal batail now in þis Emprise 2540

were for to schapen þat þey schuld not dye
he wol his firste purpos modifye
No man þerfore vp peyne of los of lyf
No maner schot/ ne pollax ne schort knyft 2544

In to þe lystes sende or þider bryng
Ne schorte swerd for to stoke þe bytyng
No man ne drawe ne bere by his side /
Ne noman schal to his felawe ryde 2548

But oon cours with a scharpe spere
Feyne if him lust on foote himself to were
And he þat is at meschief schal be take / *[leaf 34, back]*

And nat slayn but be brought to þe stake 2552
That schal be ordeyned on eyþer syde
But þider he schal by force and þer abyde /
And if so falle a cheuenten be take
On eyþer side or elles sle his make / 2556

No lenger schal þe turneynge laste
God spede þou goþ forþ and ley on faste
wip long swerd and wip mace fize þour fille
Goþ now þour way þis is þe lordes wille 2560

The voice of þe poepul touchip heuen
So lowde cried þei with mylde steuen
God saue such a lord þat is so good
he wilneþ no destruccioun of blood 2564

vp goþ þe trompes and þe melodye
And to þe lystes ryde þe companye /
By ordynaunce þurgh þe cite large
Hangyng wip cloþ of gold and not wip Sarge 2568

Ful lik a lord þis nobul Duk cam ryde
These tuo Thebans on eyþer side

And after rood þe queen and Emelye
 And after hem of ladyes anoþer companye 2572
 And after hem of comunes after here degre
 And þus þey passeden þurgh þat cite
 And to þe lystes come þei by tyme
 It nas not of þe day 3et fully pryme 2576
 whan sette was Theseus riche and hye
 ypolita þe queen and Emelye
 And oþer ladyes in here degrees aboute
 vnto þe settes passeþ al þe route 2580
 And westward þorugh þe 3ates of mart
 Arcite and eek þe hundred of his part
 with baners ys I-entred right anoon
 And þat selue moment Palomon 2584
 Is vnder Venus Estward in þat place
 with baner whyt and hardy cheer of face
IN al þe world to seeke vp and doun
 So euen wipoute Variacioun 2588
 Ther nere suche companies tweye [leaf 35]
 For ther nas noon so wys þat cowþe seye
 That any had of oþer auauntage
 Of worthines ne staat/ ne of visage 2592
 So euene were þey chosen for to gesse
 And in two Renges faire þey hem dresse
 And whan he names I-rad were euerychon
 That in here nombre gile were þer noon 2596
 Tho were þe gates schitt and cried lowde
 Doop now 3our deuoir 3onge knightes proude
 The herald 3 laften here prikyng vp & doun
 Now ryngede þe tromp and Clarioun 2600
 Ther is no more to say but Est and west
 In goþ þe speres in to þe Rest
 Ther seen men who can Iuste and who can ryde
 In goþ þe scharpe spere in to þe side 2604
 Ther schyueren schaftes vpon schuldres þyk
 he feelep þurgh þe herte spon þe prikt

vp sprengen speres on twenty foot on hight
 Out' goon þe swerdes as þe siluer bright' 2608
 The helmes þer to-hewen and to-schrede
 Out' brast' þe blood wiþ stoute stremes reede
 with mighty maces þe bones þay to-breste
 he þurgh þe pikkest' of' þe þrong' gan þreste 2612
 Ther stomblen steedes strong' and doun can falle /
 he rolled vnder foot' as doþ a balle
 he feyneþ on his foot wiþ his tronchoun
 And him hurteleþ with his hors a doun 2616
 He þurgh þe body hurt' is and siþþen take
 Maugre his heed and brouȝt' vnto þe stake /
 As forward was right' þer he most' abyde /
 Anoper lad is on þat' oper syde 2620
 And som tyme doþ Theseus hem to rest'
 hem to refreissche and drinke if' hem lest'
 Ful ofte a-day haue þis Thebans twoo
 Togider y-met' and wrought' his felaw woo 2624
 vnhorsed haþ ech oper of' hem tweye
 Ther nas no Tygyr in þe vale of' Galgopleye
 whan þat' hir whelp is stole whan it' is lite [*leaf 35, back*]
 So cruel on þe hunt' as is arcite 2628
 For Ielous hert' vpon þis Palomon
 Ne in Belmary þer is no fel lyoun
 That' hunted is or for hunger wood
 Ne of' his prey desireþ so þe blood 2632
 As Palomon to sle his foo arcite
 This Ielous strokes on here helmes byte
 Out' renneþ blood on boþe here sides reede
 Som tyme an ende þer is on euery dede 2636
 For er þe sonne vnto þe reste went
 The strang' kyng' Emetreus gan hent'
 This Palomon as he fauȝht' wiþ arcite
 And his swerd in his fleissch he did byte 2640
 And by þe force of' .xx^{ti} he is take
 Vnȝolden and I-drawe vnto þe stake

And in þe Rescous of þis Palomon
 The stronge kyng · ligurgius is born a down 2644
 The kyng Emetreus for al his strengþe
 Is born out of his sadel his swerdes lengþe
 So hit him palamon er he were take
 But al for nouȝt he was brought to þe stake / 2648
 his hardy herte might him helpe nouȝt
 He most abyde whan þat he was caught
 By force and eek by composicioun
 who sorweþ now but Palomoun 2652
 That moot no more gon agayn to fight
 And whan þat Theseus had seen þat sight
 he cryed hoo / nomore for it is doon
 Ne noon schal lenger vnto his felaw goon 2656
 I wol be trewe Iuge and nouȝt partye
 Arcyte of Thebes schal haue Emelye
 That haþ by his fortune hire I-wonne
 Anoon þer is noyse bygonne 2660
 For ioye of þis so lowde and heye with alle
 It semed þat þe listes wolde falle
 what can now fayre Venus doon aboue
 what seiþ sche now what doþ þis queen of loue / 2664
 But wepeþ so for wantyng of hir wille [leaf 36]
 Til þat hire teeres in þe lystes fille
 Sche sayde I am aschamed douteles
 Satourmus seyde douȝter hold þy pees 2668
 Mars haþ his wille his knight haþ his boone
 And by myn heed þou schalt be esed soone
 The trompes wiþ þe lowde mynstralcy
 The herawdes þat ful lowde ȝolle and cry 2672
 Been in here ioye / for daun arcyte
 But herkneþ me and styntep but a lite
 which a miracle bifel anoon
 This arcyte fersly haþ don his helm a down 2676
 And on his courser for to schewe his face
 he priked endlange in þe large place

lokyng^t vpward vpon his Emelye
 And sche agayn him cast a frendly y³e 2680
 For wommen as for to speke in comune
 þay folwe alle þe fauour of^t fortune
 And was alle his cheer and in his hert
 Out of^t þe ground a fyr infernal stert^t 2684
 From Pluto send at^t þe request^t of^t Saturne
 For which his hors for feere gan to turne
 And leep a syde and foundred as he leep
 And or þat^t arcyte may take keep 2688
 he pight^t him on þe pomel of^t þe heed
 That^t in þat^t place he lay as he were deed
 his brest^t tobroken with his sadil bowe
 As blak^t he lay as eny col or crowe 2692
 So was þe blood y-ronne in his face
 Anon he was y-born out of^t þe place
 with herte sore to Theseus paleys
 Tho was he coruen out of^t his harneys 2696
 And in a bed y-brought^t ful fair and blyue
 For ȝit he was in memory and on lyue
 And alway cryeng^t after Emelye
 Duk^t Theseus and al his companye 2700
 Is comen hom to Athenes his Cite
 with alle blys and gret^t solempnite
 Al be it þat^t þis auenture was falle
 he nolde nought^t discomfort^t hem alle / 2704
 Men seyde eek^t þat^t arcita schuld nought dye
 he schal be helyd of^t his maladye
 And of^t anoþer þing þey were as fayn
 That^t of^t hem alle þer was noon y-slayn 2708
 Al were þey sore hurt^t and namely oon
 That^t wiþ a spere was þirled his brest^t boon
 To oper woundes and to broken armes
 Some hadde salue and some hadde charmes 2712
 Fermacyes of^t herbes and eek^t saue
 They dronken for þey wolde here lyues haue

[leaf 36, back]

For which þis noble duk^t as he wel can
 Comforteþ and honoureþ euery man 2716
 And made reuel al þe lange night^t
 vnto the straunge lordes as it was right^t
 Ne þer was holden to discomfityng^t
 But as a Iustes or as a turmentyng^t 2720
 For sobly þer was no discomfiture
 For falllyng^t is but an aduenture
 Ne to be lad wip fors vnto þe stake
 Vn3olden and wip twenty knightes take 2724
 A person allone wipouten moo
 And rent^t forþ by arme foot^t and too
 And eek^t his steede dryuen forþ wip staues
 wip foote men boþe 3emen and knaues 2728
 It was aretted him no vylonye
 Ne no maner man held it^t no cowardye
FOr which Theseus lowd anon leet crie
 To stynten al rancour and al enuye 2732
 The gree as wel on o syde as on oþer
 And euery side lik^t as oþeres broþer
 And 3af^t hem 3iftes after here degre
 And fully heeld a feste dayes þre 2736
 And conueyed þe knightes worpily
 Out^t of his toun a iournee largely
 And hom went^t euery man þe righte way
 Ther was no more but^t far wel haue good day 2740
 Of þis batayl I wol no more endite [leaf 37]
 But speke of^t Palomon and of^t arcyte
Swelleþ þe brest^t of^t Arcyte and þe sore 2744
 Encresceþ at his herte more and more
 The cloþred blood for eny lechecraft
 Corrupith and in his bouk^t I-laft^t
 That^t noþer veyne blood ne ventusyng
 Ne drynk^t of^t herbes may ben his helpyng^t 2748
 The vertu expulsik^t or animal
 For þilke vertu cleped natural

Ne may þe venym voyde ne expelle
 The pypes of his lounge gan to swelle 2752
 And euery lacerte in his brest adoun
 Is schent with venym and corrupcioun
 Him gayneþ noþer for to get his lyf
 Vomyt vp-ward ne downward laxatif / 2756
 Al is to-broken pilke regioun
 Nature haþ now no dominacioun
 And certeynly wher nature wil not wirche
 Far wel phisik go bere þe man to chirche 2760
 This al and som þat arcyte moste dye
 For which he sendeþ after Emelye
 And Palomon þat was his cosyn deere
 Thanne seyð he þus as 3e schul after heere 2764
 Nought may þe woful spirit/ in myn herte
 Declare a poynt of my sorwes smerte
 To 3ou my lady þat I loue most
 But I byquethe þe seruice of my gost 2768
 To 3ou abouen euery creature
 Syn þat my lyf may no lenger dure
 Allas þe woo allas þe peynes stronge
 That I for 3ou haue suffred and so longe 2772
 Allas þe deþ allas myn Emelye
 Allas departyng of our companye
 Allas myn hertes queen allas my wyf
 Myn hertes lady ender of my lyf 2776
 what is þis world what asken men to haue
 Now wiþ his loue now in his colde graue
 Allone wiþouten eny companye [leaf 37, back]
 Far wel my swete far wel myn Emelye 2780
 And softe take me in 3our armes tweye
 For loue of god and herkneþ what I seye
 I haue heer with my cosyn Palomon
 had stryft and rancour many a day I-gon 2784
 For loue of 3ow and eek for Ielousie /
 And Iupiter so wis my sowle gye

To speken of a seruauunt proprely
 with alle circumstaunces trewely 2788
 That is to seyn troupe honour and knighthede
 wysdom humblesse astaat. and by kynrede
 Fredam and al þat longep to þat art
 So Iupiter haue of my soule part 2792
 As in þis world right now ne know I non
 So worthy to be loued as Palomon
 That serueth þou and wol do al his lyf
 And if þat þe schul euer be a wyf 2796
 Forȝet not Palomon þat gentil man
 And with þat word his speche faile gan
 For fro his herte vp to his brest was come
 The cold of deþ þat him had ouercome 2800
 And ȝet more ouer in his armes twoo
 þe vital strengþ is lost and al a-goo
 Only the intellect wiþouten more
 That dwelled in his herte sik and sore 2804
 Gan fayle whan þe herte felte deth
 Duskyng his eyȝen two and fayled breth
 But on his lady ȝit he cast his ye
 his laste word was mercy Emelye / 2808
 His spiryȝt chaunged was and wente þer
 As I cam neuer I can nat tellen wher
 Therefore I stynte I nam no dyuynistre /
 Of soules fynde I not in þis registre 2812
 Ne me list nat thopynyouns to telle
 Of hem þough þat þei wyten wher þey dwelle
 Arcyte is cold ther mars his soule gye
 Now wol I speke forþ of Emelye / 2816
 S hrighȝt Emely and howled Palomon [leaf 38]
 And Theseus his sustir took anon
 Swownyng and bar hir fro þe corps a way
 what helpeþ it to tarye forþ þe day 2820
 To telle how þat sche weep boþe eue & morwe
 For in swich caas wommen can haue such sorwe

whan þat here housbonds ben from hem ago
 That for þe more part þey sorwen so 2824
 Or elles fallen in such maladye
 That atte laste certeynly þey dye
 Infynyt been þe sorwes and þe teeres
 Of olde folk þat ben of tendre ȝeeres 2828
 So gret a wepyng was þer noon certayn
 whan Ector was I-brought al freissch I-slayn
 As þat þer was for deþ of þis Theban
 For sorwe of him þer weepþ boþe child and man 2832
 At troye allas þe pite þat was þere
 Cracchyng of cheekes rendyng eek of here
 why woldist / þou be deed þis wommen crye
 And haddest gold ynowȝ and Emelye 2836
 No man mighte / glade Theseus /
 Sauyng his olde fader Egeus /
 That knew þis worldes transmutacioun
 As he hadde seen it torne vp and down 2840
 Ioye after woo and woo aftir gladnesse
 And schewed him ensample and likenesse
Right as þer deyde neuer man *quod* he
 That he ne lyued in erþe in som degree 2844
 ȝit þer ne lyuede neuer man he seyde
 In al þis world þat som tyme he ne deyde
 This world nys but a þurghfare ful of woo
 And we ben pilgryms passyng to and fro 2848
 Deþ is an ende of euery worldly sore
 And ouer al þis ȝit seide he mochil more
 To þis effect // ful wysly to enhorte
 The peple þat schulde him recomforte 2852
Duk Theseus with al his busy cure
 Cast busily wher þat þe sepulture
 Of good arcyte may best y-maked be [*leaf 38, back*]
 And eek most honorable in his degre 2856
 And atte last he took conclusioun
 That ther as first Arcite and Palomon

hadden for loue þe batail hem bytwene
 That in the selue groue soote and greene 2860
 Ther as he hadde his amorous desires
 His compleynt and for loue his hoothe fyres
 he wolde make a fyr in which thoffice
 Funeral he might al accomplice 2864
 And leet comaunde anon to hakke and hewe /
 The Okes olde and lay hem on a rewe
 In culpounz wel arrayed for to brenne
 his officers wiþ swifte foot þey renne 2868
 And ryde anon at his comaundement
 And after þis Theseus hath I-sent
 After a beer and it al ouer spradde
 wiþ cloþ of golde þe richest þat he hadde 2872
 And of þe same sute he clad arcyte
 vpon his hondes were his gloues white
 Eke on his heed a croune of laurer grene /
 And in his hond a swerd ful bright and kene 2876
 He leyde him bare þe visage on þe beere
 Ther wiþ he weep þat pite was to heere
 And for þe poeple schulde see him alle /
 whan it was day he brought hem to þe halle 2880
 That roreth of þe cry and of þe soun
 Tho cam þis woful Theban Palomoun
 wiþ flotery berd and ruggy assly heeres
 In cloþis blak y-dropped al wiþ teeres 2884
 And passyng oþer of wepyng Emelye
 The rewfullest of al þe companye
 In as moche as þe seruice schulde be
 The more nobul and riche in his degre 2888
 Duk Theseus leet forth þre steedes bryng
 That trapped were in steel al gliteryng
 And couered wiþ armes of dan arcyte
 Vpon þe steedes that weren grete & white 2892
 Ther seeten folk / of which oon bar his scheeld [leaf 89]
 An oþer his spere vp in his hondes heeld

The þridde bar with him his bowe turkeys
 Of brend gold was þe caas and eek' þe herneys 2896
 And riden forth a paas with sorwful chere
 Toward þe groue as 3e schul after heere
 The noblest' of þe grekes þat' þer were
 vpon here schuldres carieden þe beere 2900
 with slak' paas and eyhen reed and wete
 Thurgh-out' þe cite by þe maister' streete
 That' sprad was al with blak' and wonder hye
 Right' of þe same is al þe stret' I-wrye 2904
 vpon þe right' hond went' olde Egeus
 And on þat' oþer syde duk' Theseus
 with vessels in here hand with gold wel fyn
 As ful of hony mylk' and blood and wyn 2908
 Eke Palomon with a gret companye
 And after þat' com woful Emelye
 with fyr in hond as was þat' tyme þe gyse /
 To do þo office of funeral seruise 2912
Hey3 labour and ful gret apparailynge
 was at þe seruice and at' þe fyr makynge
 That' with his grene top þe heuen raughte
 And twenty fadme of brede tharme straughte / 2916
 This is to seyn þe boowes were so brode
 Of stree first' was þer leyd ful many a loode
 but' how þe fyr was makyd vpon highte
 Ne eek' þe names how þe trees highte 2920
 As Ook' · fyr · birch · asp · aldir · holm · popler ·
 wilw. elm plane. assch. box. chesteyn lynde laurer.
 Mapul. thorn · beech · hasil · ew · wyppyltre
 how þey weren felde schal nougt be told for me 2924
 Ne how þe goddes ronnen vp and down
 Disheryt of here habitacioun
 In which þey whilom woned in rest/ and pees
 Nymphes. Faunes and Amadryes 2928
 Ne how þe beestes and þe briddes alle
 Fledden for feere / whan þe woode was falle /

Ne how þe ground agast^t was of^t þe light^t [leaf 39, back]
 That^t was nouȝt^t wont^t to see no sonne bright^t 2932
 Ne how þe fyr was couchid first^t wiþ stree
 And þanne with drye stykkes clouen in three
 And þanne wiþ grene woode and spicerie
 And þanne wiþ cloth of^t gold and wiþ perrye 2936
 And gerlandes hangyng^t with ful many a flour
 The myrre thensens wiþ also gret^t odour
 Ne how arcyte lay among^t al þis
 Ne what^t richesse / aboute his body is 2940
 Ne how þat^t Emely as was þe gyse
 Putt^t in þe fyr of^t funeral seruise
 Ne how she swowned whan sche made þe fyre
 Ne what^t sche spak^t ne what^t was hire desire 2944
 Ne what^t iewels men in þe fyr þo cast^t
 whan þat^t þe fyr was gret^t and brente fast^t
 And how sum caste hir scheeld and summe her spere
 And of^t here vestimentz which þat^t þey were 2948
 And cuppes ful of^t wyn and mylk^t and blood
 Vnto þe fyr þat^t brent^t as it were wood
 Ne how þe gregoyz wiþ an huge route
 Thre tymes ryden al þe fyr aboute 2952
 vpon þe lefte hond with an heih schoutyng^t
 And þries wiþ here speres clateryng^t
 And þries how þe ladyes gan to crye
 Ne how þat^t lad was homeward Emelye 2956
 Ne how arcyte is brent^t to aschen colde /
 [. no gap in the MS.
 Al thilke night^t ne how þe grekes pleye /
 The wake pleyes kepe I nat^t to seye 2960
 who wrastleþ best^t naked wiþ oyle enoynt^t
 Ne who þat^t bar him best^t in no disoynt^t
 I wol not^t telle eek^t how þat^t þey ben goon
 Hom til athenes whan þe pley is doon 2964
 But^t schortly to þe poynt^t now wol I wende
 And maken of^t my longe tale an ende

By proces and by lengþe of certeyn 3eres
 Al styntyð is þe mornyng and þe teeres 2968
 Of alle grekys by oon general assent
 Than semed me ther was a parlement [leaf 40]
 At athenes on a certeyn poynt / and cas
 Among þe whiche poyntes spoken was 2972
 To han wiþ certeyn contrees alliaunce /
 And haue fully of Thebans obeissance
 For which þis noble Theseus anon
 let senden after gentil Palomon 2976
 Vnwist of him what was þe cause and why
 But in his blake cloþes sorwfully
 he cam at his comaundement in hye
 Tho sente Theseus for Emelye 2980
 whan þey were sette and hussht was al þe place
 And Theseus abyden hadde a space
 Or eny word cam fro his wyse brest
 His eyen set he þer as was his lest 2984
 And wiþ a sad visage he syked stille
 And after þat right þus he seide his wille
The firste moeuere of þe cause aboue
 whan he first made þe fayre cheyne of loue 2988
 Gret was theeffect / and heigh was his entente /
 wel wist he why and what þerof he mente
 For which þat faire cheyne of loue he bond
 The fyr þe watir eyr and eek þe lond 2992
 In certeyn boundes þat þey may not flee
 That same prynce and moeuere eek quod he /
 haþ stabled in þis wrecched world a doun
 Certeyn dayes and duracioun 2996
 To alle þat er engendrid in þis place
 Ouer þe day þey may nat pace
 Al mowe they 3it wel here dayes abregge
 Ther needeþ non auctorite tallegge 3000
 For it is preued by experience
 But þat me lust declare my sentence

Than may men wel by þis ordre discerne
 That þilke moeuere stabul is and eterne 3004
 wel many men knewe but it be a fool
 That euery partye dyryueþ from his hool
 For nature haþ nat take his bygynnyng
 Of no partye ne cantel of a þingⁱ [leaf 40, back] 3008
 But of a þingⁱ þatⁱ parfytⁱ is and stable /
 Descendyngⁱ so til it be corumpable
 And þerfore of his wyse purueaunce /
 He hath so wel bisetⁱ his ordenaunce 3012
 That spices of þinges and progressiouns
 Schullen endure by successiouns
 And nat eterne be wiþoute lye
 This maistow vnderstand and se at ye 3016
LO þe Ookⁱ þatⁱ haþ so longⁱ norisschyngⁱ
 Fro tyme þatⁱ it gynneþ firstⁱ to springⁱ
 And as so longⁱ a lyfⁱ as we may see
 3etⁱ atte laste wasted is þe tree 3020
Considereþ eekⁱ how þatⁱ þe harde stoon
 vnder oure footⁱ / on which we trede and goon
 3itⁱ wasteth it as it liþ by þe weye
 The brode Ryuer som tyme wexeþ dreye 3024
 The grete townes see we wane and wende
 Than may I see þat al þingⁱ haþ an ende
OF man and womman se we wel also /
 That wendeþ in oon of þis termes two 3028
 That is to seyn / in 3ouþe or elles in age
 he mootⁱ ben deed / þe kyngⁱ as schal a page /
 Sum in his bed som in þe deepe see
 Som in þe large feel as men may se/ 3032
 Ther helpeþ naughtⁱ al goþ þilke weye
 Thanne may I see wel þat al þingⁱ schal deye
 what makeþ þis but Iubiter þe kyngⁱ
 The which is prynce and cause of alle thingⁱ 3036
 Conuertyingⁱ al vnto his propre wille
 From which he is dereyned soþ to telle /

And here agayn no creature of lyue
 Of no degre auayleþ for to stryue 3040
Than is it wisdom as þenkeþ me
 To maken vertu of necessite
 And take it wel þat we may nat eschewe
 And namely þat þat to vs alle is dewe / 3044
 And who-so gruccheþ aught he doþ folye
 And rebel is to him þat al may gye [leaf 41]
 And certeynly a man haþ most honour
 To deyen in his excellence and flour 3048
 whan he is siker of his goode name
 Than haþ he doon his freend ne him no schame
 And gladder ought his freend ben of his deþ
 whan with honour is 3olden vp þe breth 3052
 Thanne whan his name appeled is for age
 For al forgeten is his vasselage
 Thanne is it best as for a worþi fame
 To dye whan a man is best of name 3056
 The contrary of al this is wilfulnesse
 why grucchen we why haue we heuynesse /
 That good arcyte of chyualry þe flour
 Departed is with worschip and honour 3060
 Out of þis foule prisoun of þis lyf
 why gruccheþ heer his cosyn and his wyf
 Of his wel fare þat louen him so wel
 Can he hem thank / nay / god woot neuer a del 3064
 That boþe his soule and eek hem self offende
 And 3et þey may here lustes nat amende
That may I conclude of þis longe serye
 But affir wo I rede vs to be merye 3068
 And þanke Iubiter al of his grace
 And or þat we departe fro þis place /
 I rede þat we make of sorwes two
 O parfyt ioye lastyng euer mo 3072
 And lokeþ now wher most sorwe is her-Inne /
 Ther wol we first amenden and bygynne /

Sustyr *quod* he þis is my ful assent^t
 wip al thaups heer of^t my parlement^t 3076
 That gentil Palomon þour owne knight^t
 That^t serueþ þow with herte wil and might^t
 And euer haþ doon syn fyrst^t tyme þe him knewe
 That^t þe schul of^t þour grace vpon him rewe 3080
 And take him for þour housbond and for lord
 Lene me þoure hand for þis is oure acord
 let^t see now of^t þour wommanly pite
 he is a kynges broþir sone pardee [leaf 41, back] 3084
 And þough he were a pore bachiller
 Syn he haþ serued þou so many a þeer
 And had for þou so gret^t aduersite
 hit^t moste be considered trusteþ me 3088
 For gentil mercy aughte passe right^t
 Than seyde he þus to Palomon ful right^t
 I trowe þer needeþ litel sermonyng^t
 To make þou assente to þis þing^t 3092
 Com neer and tak^t þour lady by þe hond
 Bitwix hem was I-maad anon þe bond
 That highte matrimoyn or mariage
 By alle þe counseil and þe baronage 3096
 And thus with blys and eek^t wip melodye
 Haþ Palomon I-wedded Emelye
 And god þat^t al þis wyde world haþ wrought^t
 Send him his loue þat^t haþ it^t deere I-bought^t 3100
 For now is Palomon in al his wele
 Lyuyng in blisse richesse and in hele
 And Emely him loueth so tendirly
 And he hir serueþ also gentilly 3104
 That^t neuer wordes hem bitweene
 Of^t gelousy ne of^t non opir teene /
 Thus endeþ Palomon and Emelye
 And god saue al þis fayre companye / Amen. 3108
 Here endeþ þe knightes tale

[No break in the MS.]

¶ And þus bygynneþ þe prologe of þe myllere

WHan þat þe knight had þus his tale I-told
 In al þe route nas þer 3ong^t ne old
 That he ne seyde it was a noble story

And worpi to be drawn in memory 3112

And namely þe gentils euerich oon

Oure host þo lowh and swoor so moot I goon

This goþ right wel vnbokeled is þe male /

Let se now who schal telle anoper tale 3116

For trewely þis game is wel bygonne /

Now telleþ now sir monk if þat 3e konne

Som what to quyte wiþ þe knightes tale /

The Myller þat for drunken was al pale 3120

So þat vnnethe vpon his hors he sat [leaf 42]

he wold auale nowþer hood ne hat

Ne abyde no man for his curtesye

But in Pilates voys he gan to crye 3124

And swor by armes and by blood and bones

I can a noble tale for þe noones

with which I wol now quyte þe knightes tale

Oure hoost saugh wel how dronke he was of ale 3128

And seyde Robyn abyde my leue broþer

Som better man schal telle vs first anoper

Abyd and let vs worken priftyly

By goddes soule quod he þat wol nat I 3132

For I wol speke or elles go my way

Oure host answed / tel on a deuel way

Thou art a fool þy witt is ouercome /

¶ Now herkneþ quod þis myller al and some 3136

But first I make a protestacioun

That I am dronke I knowe wel by my soun

And þefore if þat I mys speke or seye

wyte it þe ale of Southwerk I 3ou preye 3140

For I wol telle a legende and a lyf
 Bothe of a Carpenter and of his wyf
 how þat þe clerkʳ hap set þe wriȝtes cappe /
The reue answered and seyde stynt þi clappe / 3144
 let be þy lewed drunken harlottrye
 It is a synne and eekʳ a greetʳ folye
 To apeyren eny man or him defame
 And eekʳ to brynge wyues in ylle name 3148
 Thou maystʳ ynowʳ of oþer þinges seyn
 This dronken Miller spakʳ ful sone a-geyn
 And seyde leewe brother Osewold
 who hath no wyfʳ he is no Cokewold 3152
 But I seye notʳ þerfore þatʳ þou artʳ oon
 Ther been ful goode wyues many oon
 And euer a þousand goode agayns oon badde
 Thatʳ knowestʳ þou wel þy selfʳ butʳ ifʳ þou madde 3156
 why artʳ þou angry with my tale now /
 I haue a wyfʳ *par* de as wel as thou
 3it nolde I for the oxen in my plough [leaf 42, back]
 Take vpon me more þan ynough 3160
 Though þatʳ þou deme þiselfʳ þatʳ þou be oon
 I wol bileewe wel þatʳ I am ¹oon [1 a later n prefix]
 An housbond schal notʳ be inquisityfʳ
 Of goddes pryuate ne ofʳ his wyfʳ 3164
 So þatʳ he fynde goddes foyssoun þere
 Of þe remenauntʳ needeþ noughʳ enquire /
 whatʳ schuld I seye butʳ þat þis proud Millere
 he nolde his wordes for no man forbere 3168
 Butʳ tolde his cherlich tale in his manere
 Me aþinkeþ þatʳ I schal reherce it heere
 And þerfor euery gentil wightʳ I preye.
 For goddes loue as deme nat þat I seye 3172
 Of yuel entent butʳ for I moot reherse
 here wordes alle ¶ al be þey better or werse
 Or elles falsen som ofʳ my mateere
 And þerfor who-so listʳ it natʳ to heere 3176

Turne ouer þe leef^t and cheese anoþer tale
 For he schal fynde ynowe bothe gret^t and smale
 Of storial þing^t þat^t toucheþ gentillesse
 And eek^t more ryalte and holynesse 3180
 Blameþ nat me If^t þat^t 3e cheese amys
 The Miller is a cherl 3e know wel þis
 So was þe reeue and oþir many mo
 And harlotry þey tolden boþe two 3184
 Auyseþ 3ou and put^t me out / of^t blame
 And men schulde nat make earnest^t of^t game
 Here endeþ þe prologe of^t þe Miller

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ And bygynneth his tale

Whilom þer was dwellyng^t at^t Oxenford
 A riche gnof^t that^t gestes heeld to boorde
 And of^t his craft^t he was a Carpenter 3189
 wiþ him þer was dwellyng^t a pore scoler
 had lerned art^t but^t al his fantasye
 was torned for to lerne astrologye 3192
 An cowde a certeyn of^t conclusiouns
 To deme by interrogaciouns
 If^t þat men axed him in certeyn houres [1 leaf 43]
¹whan þat men schuld han drought^t or ellys schoures 3196
 Or if^t men axed him what schulde bifalle
 Of^t euery þing I may nouȝt^t reken hem alle
 This clerk^t was cleped heende Nicholas
 Of^t derne loue he cowde and of^t solas 3200
 And þer wiþ he was sleigh and ful priue
 And lik^t amayden meke for to se
 A chambir had he in his hostillerye
 Alone wiþouten eny compaignye 3204
 Ful fetisly I-dight^t with herbes soote /
 And he himself^t as swete as is þe roote
 Of^t lokorys or eny Cetewale
 his almagest^t and bookes gret and smale 3208
 his astrylabe longyng^t for his art
 his augrym stoones leyn faire a part^t
 On schelues couched at^t his beddes heed
 his presse I-couered wiþ a faldyng^t reed 3212
 And al aboue þer lay a gay Sawtrye
 On which he made a nightes melodye
 So swetely þat^t al þe chambur rang^t
 And angelus ad virginem he sang^t 3216
 And after þat he sang^t þe kynges note
 Ful often blissed was his mery þrote

And þus þis sweete clerk^t his tyme spente
 After his frendes fyndyng^t and his rente 3220

This carpenter had weddid newe a wyf^t
 which þat^t he loved more þan his lyf^t
 Of^t eyzteteene ȝeer sche was of^t age
 Gelous he was and heeld hir narwe in cage 3224

For sche was wilde & ȝong^t and he was old
 And demed himself^t be lik^t a Cokewold
 he knew nat Catoun for his wit^t was rude
 That^t bad man schulde wedde his similitude 3228

Men schulde wedde aftir here astaat^t
 For eelde and ȝoupe ben often at^t debaat^t
 But^t syn þat^t he was brouȝt^t in to þe snare
 He moste endure as opere doon his care 3232

Fair was þe ȝonge wyf^t and þer wiȝ al
 As eny wesil hir body gent and smal [leaf 43, back]

A seynt^t sche wered barred al of^t silk^t
 A barmclop eek^t as whit^t as morne mylk^t 3236
 vpon hir lendes ful of^t many a gore
 whit^t was hir smok^t and browdid albyfore

And eek^t byhynde on hir coler aboute
 Of^t coleblak^t silk^t wipinne and eek^t wipoute 3240
 The tapes of^t hir white voluper
 weren of^t þe same sute of hire coler

hir filet^t brood of^t silk^t y-set ful heye
 And certeynly sche hadd a licorous eyȝe 3244
 Ful smal y-pulled weren hir browes two /
 And þo were bent as blak^t as a slo

Sche was wel more blisful on to see
 Than is þe newe perionette tree 3248
 And softer þan þe wol is of^t a weȝir
 And by hir gurdil hyng a purs of^t leȝir

Tassid wiȝ silk^t and perled wiȝ latoun
 In al þis world to seken vp and down 3252
 Ther nys no man so wys þat coupe þenche /
 So gay a popillot^t or such a wenche /

For brighter was þe smylyng^t of^t hir hewe
 Than in þe tour þe noble I-forged newe 3256
 But^t of^t hir song^t it^t was as lowde and 3erne
 As eny swalwe chiteryng^t on a berne
 Ther to sche cowde skippe and make game
 As eny kyde or calf^t folowyng^t his dame 3260
 hir mouth was sweete as bragat^t is or meth
 Or hoord of^t apples layd in hay or heth
 wynsyng^t sche was as is a Ioly colt^t
 long^t as a mast^t / and vpright^t as a bolt / 3264
 A broch sche bar vpon hir loue coleer
 As brod as is þe bos of^t a bocleer
 hir schos were laced / on hir legges hey3e
 Sche was a primerole¹ a pigges ney3e 3268
 For eny lord haue liggyng^t in his bedde [*a later & is put in here*]
 Or 3et^t for eny good 3eman to wedde
 Now sir and eft^t sir / so bifel þe cas
 That^t on a day þis heende Nicholas [*leaf 44*] 3272
 Fil wiþ þis 3onge wyf^t to rage and pleye
 whil þat^t hir housbond was at^t Oseneye
 As clerkes ben ful sotil and ful queynte
 And pryuely he caught hir by þe queynte 3276
 And seyde I-wis but if I haue my wille
 For derne loue of^t þe lemman I spille /
 And heeld hir harde by þe haunche boones
 And seyde lemman loue me al at^t ones 3280
 Or I wol dye as wisly god me saue
 And sche sprang^t out^t / as doþ a colt/ in traue
 And wiþ hir heed sche wried fast^t away
 I seyde I wol nat^t kisse þe by my fey 3284
 why let^t be quod sche / lat^t be þou nicholas /
 Or I wol crye out^t harrow and allas
 Do wey 3our handes for 3our curtesye
 This nicholas gan mercy for to crye 3288
 And spak^t so faire and profred him so faste/
 That^t sche hir loue him graunted atte laste /

And swor hir oth / by seynt^t thomas of^t kent^t
 That^t sche wol be at^t his comaundement 3292
 whan þat^t sche may hir leysir wel aspye
 Myn housbond is so ful of Ielousie /
 That^t but^t 3e wayten wel and be pryue
 I woot^t right^t wel I am but^t deed quod sche 3296
 3e mosten be ful derne as in þis caas
 Ther of^t ne care þe nought^t quod Nicholas
 A clerk^t hap^t litherly byset^t his while
 But^t if^t he cowde a carpenter bygyle 3300
 And þus þey ben acorded and I-sworn
 To wayte a tyme as I haue told biforn
Whan Nicholas had doon þus euery del
 And thakked hire aboute þe lendys wel 3304
 he kist^t hir sweet / and takeþ his sawtrye
 And pleyeþ fast^t and makeþ melodye
 Than fyl it þus / þat^t to þe parisch chirche /
 Cristes owen werkes for to wirche 3308
 This goode wyf^t / went^t on an haly day
 Hir forheed schon as bright^t as eny day [leaf 44, back]
 So was it^t waisschen whan sche leet^t hir werk^t
Now þer was of^t þat^t chirche a parisch clerk^t 3312
 The which þat^t was I-cleped Absolon
 Crulle was his heer and as þe gold it schon
 And strowted as a fan right^t large and brood
 Ful streyt^t and euene lay his ioly schood 3316
 his rode was reed his eyzen gray as goos
 with Powles wyndowes coruen in his schoos
 In his hoses reed he went fetusly
 I-clad he was ful smal and properly 3320
 Al in a kirtel of^t a fyn wachet^t
 Schapen with goores in þe newe get^t
 And þer vpon he had a gay surplys
 As whyt^t as is þe blosme vpon þe rys 3324
 A mery child he was so god me saue
 wel couþe he lete blood and clippe and schauē

And make a chartre of lond and acquitaunce
 In twenty maners he coude skip and daunce 3328
 After þe scole of Oxenforde þo
 And wiþ his legges casten to and fro
 And pleyen songes on a smal rubible
 Therto he sangt som tyme a lowde quynnyble 3332
 And as wel coude he pleye on a giterne /
 In al þe toun nas brewhous ne tauerne
 That he ne visited with his solas
 Ther as any gaylard tapster was 3336
 Bot soþ to say he was som del squaymous
 Of fartyng / and of speche daungerous
 This absolon þat ioly was and gay
 Goþ wiþ a senser on þe haly day 3340
 Sensyng þe wyues of þe parisch fast
 And many a louely look on hem he cast
 And namely on þis Carpenteres wyf
 To loke on hire him þought a mery lyf 3344
 Sche was so propre sweete and licorous
 I dar wel sayn if sche had ben a mous
 And he a cat he wold hir hent anoon
This parisch clerk this Ioly Absolon [leaf 45] 3348
 Hap in his herte such a loue longyng
 That of no wyf ne took he noon offryng /
 For curtesy he seyde he wolde noon
 The moone at night ful cleer and brighte schoon 3352
 And absolon his giterne hap I-take
 For paramours he seyde he wold awake /
 And for he goþ iolyf and ameraus /
 Til he cam to þe Carpenteres hous 3356
 A litel after þe cok had y-crowe /
 And dressed him vp by a schot wyndowe /
 That was vnder þe Carpenteres wal
 he syngeþ in his voys gentil and smal 3360
 Now deere lady if pi wille be
 I praye 3ow þat 3e wol rewe on me

Ful wel acordyng^t to his gyternyng^t
 This carpenter awook^t and herde him syng^t 3364
 And spak^t vnto his wyf^t and sayde anoon
 what^t alisoun herestow not absolon
 That^t chaunteþ þus vnder oure boure smal
 And sche answerd hir housbond þer wiþ al 3368
 3is God woot Iohn I heere it^t euery del

This passeþ forth what^t wil 3e bet^t þan wel
 Fro day to day þis Ioly Absolon
 So woweþ hire þat him is wo bigon 3372
 he wakeþ al þe night^t and al þe day
 To kembe his lokkes brode and made him gay
 he wowitz hire by mene and by brocage
 And swor he wolde ben hir owne page / 3376
 he syngþ crowyng^t as a nightyngale
 And sent^t hire pyment^t meth and spiced ale /
 And wafres pypyng^t hoot^t out^t of^t þe gleede
 For þat^t sche was of^t toune he profred meede 3380
 For som folk^t wol be wonne for richesse
 And som for strokes som for gentillesse
 Som tyme to schewe his lightnes and maistrye
 he pleyeth herod³ on a scaffold hye 3384
 But^t what^t avayleþ him as in þis caas /
 Sche loueþ so þis heende Nicholas [leaf 45, back]

That^t absolon may blowe þe bukkes horn
 he ne had for al his labour but^t a skorn 3388
 And þus sche makeþ absolon hir ape
 And al his earnest^t torneþ to a Iape

Ful soþ is þis prouerbe it^t is no lye
 Men seyn right^t þus alway þe ney slye 3392
 Makeþ þe ferre leef^t to be loþ
 For þough þat absolon be wood or wroth
 By cause þat^t he fer was from here sight^t
 This Nicholas hap stonden in his light 3396
 Now bere þe wel þou heende Nicholas
 For absolon may wayle and synge allas

¶ And so bifeH it on a Satyrday
 This Carpenter was gon to Osenay 3400
 And heende Nicholas and alisoun
 Acordid ben to þis conclusioun
 That Nicholas schal schapen hem a wyle
 This sely Ielous housbond to begyle / 3404
 And if so were þis game wente aright
 Sche schulde slepe in his arm al night
 For þis was hire desir and his also
 And right anoon wiþouten wordes mo 3408
 This Nicholas no lenger wold he tarye
 But doþ ful softe in to his Chambur carye
 Boþe mete and drynke for a day or tweye
 And to hir housbond bad hir for to seye 3412
 If þat he axed after Nicholas
 Sche schulde seye sche wiste nat wher he was
 Of al þat day sche saw him nat with eye
 Sche trowed he were falle in som maladye 3416
 For no cry þat hir mayden cowde him calle
 he nolde answeere for nought þat may bifalle
This passeþ forþ al þat ilke satyrday
 Tha Nicholas in his chambre lay 3420
 And eet and drank and dede what him leste
 Til soneday þe sonne was gon to reste
 This sely carpenter haþ gret meruaile [leaf 46]
 Of Nicholas or what þing may him ayle 3424
 And seyde I am a-drad by seynt Thomas
 It stondeþ nat aright wiþ Nicholas
 God schilde þat he deyde sodeinly
 This world is now ful tykel sikerly 3428
 I saugh to-day a corps y-born to chirche
 That now on monday last I saugh him wirche
 Go vp quod he vnto his knaue anoon
 Clepe at his dore and knokke wiþ a stoon 3432
 Loke how it is and telle me boldely
 This knaue goþ him vp ful sturdily

And at þe chambir dore whil he stood
 he cryed and knockked as þat he were wood 3436
 what how what do ȝe mayster nicholay
 how may ȝe slepen al þis longe day
 But al for noughȝt he herde nat o word
 An hole he fond right lowe vpon a boord 3440
 Ther as þe cat was wont in for to creepe /
 And at þat hole he loked in ful deepe /
 And atte laste he hadde of him a sight
 This nicholas sat euer gapyng vpright 3444
 As he had loked on þe newe moone
 Adoun he goþ and tolde his mayster soone
 In what aray he sawh þis ilke man
 This carpenter to blessen him bygan 3448
 And seyde now help vs seynte Frideswyde
 A man woot litel what him schal betyde
 This man is falle with his astronomye
 In som woodnesse or in som agonye 3452
 I thought ay wel how þat it schulde be
 Men schulde noughȝt knowe of goddes pruyte
 ¶ ȝe blessed be alwey a lewed man
 That nat but oonly his bileue can 3456
 So ferde anoper clerk with astronomye /
 he walked in the feeldes for to pryde
 vpon þe sterres what þer schulde bifalle
 Til he was in a marle pit I-falle / 3460
 he saugh nat þat but ȝet by seint Thomas /
 Me reweth sore for heende nicholas [leaf 46, back]
 he schal be ratyd of his studyng
 If þat I may by ihū heuen kyng 3464
 Gete me a staf þat I may vnder spore
 whil þat þou Robyn heuest vp þe dore
 he schal out of his studyng as I gesse
 And to þe chambir dore he gan him dresse / 3468
 his knaue was a strong karl for þe noones
 And by þe hasp he haf it vp at oones

And in þe floor þe dore fil doun anoon
 This nicholas sat stille as eny stoon 3472
 And euer he capyd vpward to þe eyr
 This Carpenter wende he were in despeir
 And hent him by þe schuldres mightily
 And schook him harde and cryed spitously 3476
 what Nicholas what how man loke a doun
 A-wake and þynk on cristes passioun
 I crowche þe from Elues and from wightes
 Ther-with þe night-spel seyde he anon rightes 3480
 On þe foure halues of þe hous aboute /
 And of þe þreisshfold of þe dore wiþoute
 lord Ihū crist and seynte bendight
 Blesse þis hous from euery wikkede wight 3484
 for nyghtes verray þe white pater-noster
 wher wonestow now, seynte petres soster
 And atte laste heende Nicholas
 Gan for to syke sore and seyde allas 3488
 Schal al þe world be lost eft sones now
 This Carpenter answerde what seystow /
 what þenk on god as we doon men þat swynke
 This Nicholas answerde fette me drynke 3492
 And after wol I speke in pryuyte
 Of certeyn þing þat toucheþ þe and me
 I wol telle it non oþer man certayn
 This Carpenter goþ forth and comp agayn 3496
 And brought of mighty ale a large quart/
 whan ech of hem y-dronken had his part
 This Nicholas his dore gan to schitte
 And dede þis carpenter doun by him sitte [leaf 47] 3500
 And seide Iohan myn host ful leue and deere
 Thou schalt vpon þy troupe swere me heere /
 That to no wight þou schalt þis counsel wreye
 For it is cristes counsel þat I seye 3504
 And if þou telle it man þou art forlore
 For þis vengauce þou schalt han þefore

That if þou wreye me þou schalt be wood
 Nay crist forbede it for his holy blood 3508
 Quod þo þis sely man I am no labbe
 Though I it say I am nought leef to gabbe /
 Say what þou wolt I schal it neuer telle /
 To child ne wyf by him þat harwed helle 3512
Now Iohan quod nicholas I wol not lye
 I haue I-founde in myn astrologye
 As I haue loked in þe moone bright
 That now on monday next at quarter night 3516
 Schal falle a reyn and þat so wilde and wood
 That half so gret was neuer Noes flood
 This worlde he seyde more þan an hour
 Schal ben I-dreynt so hidous is þe schour 3520
 Thus schal mankynde drenche and leese his lyf
 This Carpenter answered allas my wyf
 And shal she drenche allas myn alisoun
 For sorwe of þis he fel almost adoun 3524
 And seyde is þer no remedy in þis caas
 whe 3is for gode quod heende Nicholas
 If þou wolt werken aftir lore and reed
 Thou maist nought worke after þin owen heed 3528
 For þus seip Salomon þat was ful trewe
 werke by counseil / and þou schalt nat rewe
 And if þou worken wolt by good counsail
 I vndertake wipouten mast and sail 3532
 3et schal I sauen hir and þe and me
 hastow nat herd / how saued was Noe
 whan þat our lord had warned him biforn
 That al þe world wip watir schulde be lorn 3536
 3is quod þis Carpenter ful 3ore ago
 hastow nought herd quod Nicholas also [leaf 47, back]
 The sorwe of Noe wip his felaschipe
 That he hadde or he gat his wyf to schipe 3540
 him hadde wel leuer I dar wel vndertake /
 At þilke tyme þan alle his weperes blake

That sche hadde a schip hir self allone
 And þerfore wostow what is best to doone / 3544
 This axeþ hast and of an hasty þing
 Men may nought preche or make taryyng
 Anon go gete vs fast in to þis In
 A knedyng trowh or elles a kemelyn 3548
 For ech of vs but loke þat þey be large
 In which þat we may rowe as in a barge
 And haue þer In vitaille suffisant
 But for o day, fy on þe remenant 3552
 The water schal aslake and gon away
 Aboute prime vpon þe nexte day
 But Robyn may not wite of þis þy knaue
 Ne ek þy mayde Gille I may not saue 3556
 Aske nought why for þough þou aske me
 I wol nat tellen goddes pryuate
 Sufficeth þe but if þat þy witt/ madde
 To haue as gret a grace as noe hadde / 3560
 Thy wyf schal I wel sauen out of doute /
 Go now þy wey and speed þe heer aboute
 And whan þou hast for hir and þe and me /
 I-goten vs þis knedyng tubbes þre 3564
 Than schalt þou hange hem in þe roof ful hie
 That no man of oure purueaunce aspye
 And whan þou þus hast doon as I haue seyð
 And hast our vitaille faire in hem I-leyd 3568
 And eek an ax to smyte þe corde a-two
 whan þat þe water comeþ þat we may goo
 And breke an hole an hye vpon þe gable
 In to þe gardynward ouer þe stable / 3572
 That we may frely passen forþ oure way
 whan þat þe grete schour is gon away
 Than schaltow swymme as mery I vndertake
 As doth þe white doke aftir hir drake [leaf 48] 3576
 Than wol I clepe how alisoun how Ion.
 [Beoth merye for the flood passeþ a-non] [in a later hand]

And þou wolt^t seye heyl maister nicholay
 Good morn I see þe wel for it is day 3580
 And þan schul we be lordes al oure lyf^t
 Of al þe world as noe and his wyf^t
 But^t of^t oo þing^t I warne þe ful right^t
 Be wel auysed of^t þat^t ilke nyght 3584
 That^t we ben entred in to schippes boord
 That^t not^t of^t vs ne speke not^t a word
 Ne clepe ne crye but^t be in his preyere
 For it is goddes owne heste deere 3588
 Thy wyf^t and þou most^t hangen fer a-twynne
 For þat^t bitwixe 3ou schal be no synne
 No more in lokyng^t þan þer schal in dede /
 This ordynauunce is seyð, so god me speede / 3592
 To morwe at^t night^t whan men ben a slepe /
 In to our knedyng^t tubbes wol we crepe /
 And sitte þer abydyng^t goddes grace /
 Go now þy way I haue no lenger space 3596
 To make of^t þis no lenger sermonyng^t
 Men seyn þus / send þe wyse and sey no þing^t
 Thou art^t so wys it^t needeth nat^t þe teche
 Go saue oure lyf^t and þat^t I þe byseche / 3600
This seely carpenter goþ forþ his way
 Ful ofte he seyð allas and weylaway
 And to his wyf^t he told his pryuete
 And sche was war and knew it^t bet^t þan he / 3604
 what^t al this wente cast^t was for to seye /
 But^t napeles sche ferd as sche schuld deye
 And seyde allas go forth þy way anoon
 help vs to skape or we be ded echon 3608
 I am þy verray trewe wedded wyf^t
 Go deere spouse and help to saue oure lyf^t
 lo which a gret^t þing^t is affeccion
 A man may dye for ymaginacoun 3612
 So deepe may impressioun be take
 This seely Carpenter bygynneth quake

him þenkeþ verrayly þat he may se
 Noes flood come walkyng as þe see / 3616
 To drenchen alisoun his hony deere
 he weepeþ wayleþ he maketh sory cheere
 he sikeþ with ful many a sory swough
 And goth and geteth him a knedyng trough 3620
 And after þat a tubbe and a kymelyn
 And pryuely he sent hem to his In
 And heng hem in þe roof in pryute
 His owne hond þan made laddres þre 3624
 To clymben by þe ronges and þe stalkes
 vnto þe tubbes hangyng in þe balkes
 And hem vitayled boþe trough and tubbe
 with breed and cheese wiþ good ale in a Iubbe 3628
 Suffisyng right ynough as for a day
 But or þat he had maad al þis array
 he sent his knaue and eek his wenche also
 vpon his neede to londoun for to go 3632
 And on þe monday whan it drew to nyght
 he schette his dore wiþouten candel light
 And dressed al þis þing as it schuld be
 And schortly vp þey clumben alle þre 3636
 They seten stille wel a forlong way
 Now pater noster clum quod Nicholay
 And Clum quod Ion and Clum . quod. Alisoun
 This Carpenter seyde his deuocioun 3640
 And stille he sitt and byddeþ his prayere
 Ay waytyng on þe Reyn if he it heere
 The deede sleep for verray busynesse
 Fil on þis Carpenter right as I gesse / 3644
 Abowten courfew tyme or litel more
 For trauail of his goost he groneþ sore
 And eft he routeþ for his heed myslay
 Doun of þe laddir stalkeþ Nicholay 3648
 And alisoun ful softe a doun hir spedde
 wiþouten wordes mo þey goon to bedde

Ther as þe Carpenter was wont to lye
 Ther was þe Reuel and þe melodye [leaf 49] 3652
 And þus lith alisoun and Nicholas
 In busynesse of myrþe and of solas
 Til þat þe belles of laudes gan to ryng
 And freres in þe Chauncel gan to synge 3656
This parissch clerk þis amerous absolon
 That is for loue so harde and woo bygon
 vpon þe Monday was at Osenay
 with company him to desporte and play 3660
 And axed vpon caas a cloysterer
 Ful pryuely after þe carpenter
 And he drough him a part out of þe chirche
 And sayde nay I say him nat here wirche 3664
 Syn satirday I trow þat he be went
 For tymber þer our abbot hath him sent/
 For he is wont for tymber for to goo
 And dwellen at þe graunge a day or tuo 3668
 Or elles he is at his hous certayn
 wher þat he be I can nat soply sayn
This absolon ful ioly was and light
 And thoughte now is tyme wake al night 3672
 For sikerly I sawh him nought styryng
 Aboute his dore syn day bigan to spryng
 So mote I pryue I schal at Cokkes crowe
 Ful pryuely go knocke at his wyndowe 3676
 That stant ful lowe vpon his bowres wal
 To alisoun þan wol I tellen al
 My loue-longyng for ȝet I schal not mysse
 That atte leste wey I schal hir kisse 3680
 Som maner comfort schal I haue par fay
 My mouth hap icched al þis longe day
 That is a signe of kysyng atte leste
 Al nyght I mette eek I was at a feste 3684
 Ther fore I wol go slepe an hour or tweye
 And al þe night þan wol I wake and pleye

whan þat þe firste cok' hap crowe anon
 vp ryst' þis Iolyf' loue absolon 3688
 And him arrayeþ gay at' poynt' deys
 But' first' he cheweþ greyn and lycoris [leaf 49, back]
 To smellen swete or he hadde kempt' his heere
 vnder his tunge a trewe loue he beere / 3692
 For þer by wende he to be gracious
 he romeþ to þe carpenteres hous
 And stille he stant' vnd þe schot' wyndowe /
 vnto his brest' it' raught/ it' was so lowe / 3696
 And softe he cowhiþ with a semy soun
 what' do 3e hony comb swete alisoun
 My fayre bryd my swete Cynamome
 Awake lemman myn and spekeþ tome 3700
 wel litel þynke 3e vpon my wo
 That' for 3oure loue I swelte þer I go
 No wonder is if' þat' I swelte and swete /
 I morne as dop a lamb after þe tete 3704
 I-wis lemman I haue such loue-longyng'
 That' like a turtil trewe is my moornyng'
 I may not' ete no more þan a mayde /
 ¶ Go fro þe wyndow Iakke fool sche sayde / 3708
 As help me god it wol not' be com paine
 I loue anoþer and elles were I to blame
 wel bet' þan þe by Ihū absolon
 Go forþ þy wey or I wol cast' a stoon 3712
 And let me slepe a twenty deuelway
 Allas quod absolon and weylaway
 That' trewe loue was euer so ylle bysett/
 þanne kisseth me syn it may be no bett' 3716
 For Iesus loue and for þe loue of' me
 wilt' þou þan go þy wey þer with quod sche
 3e certes lemman quod þis absolon
 Than mak' þe redy quod sche I come anon 3720
 [.
 no gap in the MS.]
 This absolon doun sette him on his knees

And seide I am a lord at alle degrees 3724
 For after þis I hope þer comeþ more
 Lemman þy grace / and swete bryd þyn ore
 The wyndow sche vndyd and þat in hast'
 haue doon quod sche com of and speed þe fast' 3728
 lest' þat' our neygheboures þe aspye
 This absolon gan wipe his mouþ ful drye [leaf 50]
 Derk' was þe night' as picche or as a cole /
 Out' atte wyndow putte sche hir hole / 3732
 And absolon him fel no bet ne wers
 But' wip his mouth he kist' hir naked ers
 Ful sauorly, whan he was war of þis
 Abak' he sterte and þought' it' was amys 3736
 For wel he wist' a womman hap no berd
 he felt' a þing' al rough and long' I-herd
 And seyde fy allas what' haue I do
 Tehee quod sche / and clapt' þe wyndow to 3740
 And absolon goþ forþ a sory paas
 A berd a berd / quod heende Nicholas
 By goddes corps þis game goþ fair and wel
 This seely absolon herd euery del 3744
 And on his lippe he gan for angir byte
 And to himself' he seyde I schal þe quyte
Who rubbiþ now who froteth now his lippes 3747
 wip dust wip sand wip straw wip cloth wip chippes
 But' absolon þat' seith fulofte allas
 My soule bytake I vnto Sathanas
 But me were leuer þan alle þis toun quod he
 Of þis dispit' awroken for to be 3752
 Allas quod he allas I nadde bleynt
 his hoote loue was cold and al I-queynt
 For fro þat' tyme þat' he had kist' hire ers
 Of paramours ne sette he nat a kers 3756
 For he was helyd of his maledye
 Fulofte paramours he gan deffye
 And wept' as doþ a child þat' is I-bete
 A softe paas went he ouer þe strete / 3760

Vnto a smyth men clepith daun Gerueys
 That in his forge smythed plowh harneys
 He scharpeth schar and cultre bysily
 This absolon knokkeþ al esily 3764
 And seyde vnto Geruays and þat anoon
 what who art thou? it am I Absolon
 what Absolon what ¹eristes swete tree [1 a later for is put here]
 why ryse 3e so rathe benedicite [leaf 50, back] 3768
 what eyleþ 3ou some gay gurl god it woot
 haþ brought 3ou þus vpon þe verytrot
 By seinte noet / 3e wot wel what I mene
 This absolon ne roughte nat a bene 3772
 Of al þis pley no word agayn he 3af
 For he hadde more tow on his distaf
 Than Gerueys knew and seyde freend so deere
 That hote cultre in þe Chymney heere 3776
 As lene it me I haue þer wip to doone
 I wol it bring agayn to þe ful soone
 Gerueys answerde / certes were it gold
 Or in a poke nobles al vntold 3780
 3e schul him haue as I am trewe smyth
 Ey cristes fo¹ what wil 3e do þer wip [1 a later te is added]
 Ther of quod absolon be as be may
 I schal wel telle it þe to morwe day 3784
 And caughte þe cultre by þe colde stele
 Ful soft out at þe dore he gan it stele /
 And wente vnto þe carpenteres wal
 he cowheþ first and knokkeþ þer wip al 3788
 vpon the wyndow right as he dede er
 This alisoun answerde who is ther
 That knokkest so? I warant it a þeeft
 why nay quod he god woot my sweete leef
 I am þyn absolon, O my derlyng 3792
 Of gold quod he I haue þe brought a ryng
 My mooder 3af it me so god me saue
 Ful fyn it is and þerto wel I-graue 3796

This wol I giue þe / if þou me kisse
 This Nicholas was rise for to pysse
 And þought he wold amenden al þe Iape
 he schulde kisse his ers or þat he skape 3800
 And vp þe wyndow dyde he hastily
 And out his ers putteþ he pryuely
 Ouer þe buttoke to haunche bon
 And þer wiþ spak þis clerk þis absolon 3804
 Spek sweete bryd I wot nat wher þou art /
 This Nicholas anon let fle a fart [leaf 51]
 As gret as it had ben a thundir dent
 And with þat strook he was almost I-blent 3808
 And he was redy with his yren hoot
 And Nicholas amyð þe ers he smoot
 Of goþ þe skyn an hande brede aboute
 The hoothe cultre brente so his toute 3812
 And for þe smert / he wende for to dye
 As he were wood anon he gan to crye
 help watir watir / help for goddes herte
 This Carpenter out of his slumber sterte 3816
 And herd on crye watir as he were wood
 He þought allas for now comeþ Noes flood
 he sit him vp wiþoute wordes mo
 And wiþ his ax he smot þe corde a-two 3820
 And down he goþ he fond nowthir to selle /
 No bred ne ale til he com to þe selle/
 Vpon þe floor and þer aswoun he lay
 vp styrt hir alisoun and Nicholay 3824
 And cryden out and harrow in þe strete /
 The neygheours boþe smal and grete /
 In ronnen for to gauren on þis man
 That a swowne lay boþe pale and wan 3828
 For with þe fal he brosten had his arm
 But stond he muste to his owne harm
 For whan he spak he was anon born down
 with heende Nicholas and alisoun 3832

They tolden euery man þat he was wood
 he was a gast and feerd of Noes flood
 Thurgh fantasie þat of his vanite /
 he hadde I-bought him knedyng tubbes þre / 3836
 And hadde hem hanged in þe roof aboue /
 And þat he preyed hem for goddes loue /
 To sitten in þe roof par compaignye
 The folk gan lawhen at his fantasye / 3840
 In to þe roof þey kyken and þey gape
 And torne al his harm in to a Iape
 For what so euer þe carpenter answerde
 Hit was for nought no man his resoun herde [*lf 51, bk*] 3844
 wiþ opis greet he was so sworn a doun
 That he was holden wood in al þe toun
 For euery clerk anon right heeld wiþ opir
 They seyde þe man was wood my leue broþer 3848
 And euery man gan lawhen at his stryf
 Thus swyued was þe Carpenteres wyf
 For al his kepyng and his gelousye
 And absolon haþ kist hir nepir ye 3852
 And Nicholas is skaldid in his towte
 This tale is doon and god saue al þe route
 Here endeth þe Millers tale

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ And bygynneþ þe prologe of þe Reeue

Whan folk hadde lawhen of þis nyce caas
Of Absolon and heende Nicholas 3856
Dyuerse folk dyuersely þey seyde

But for þe moste part þey lowh and pleyde /
Ne at þis tale I sawh no man him greue
But it were oonly Osewald þe Reeue 3860
By cause he was of Carpentrye craft
A litel Ire is in his herte is laft

He gan to grucche and blamed it a lite
So theek quod he ful wel coude I þe quyte 3864
with bleryng of a prowde mylleres ye
If þat me luste speke of Ribaudye

But yk am old me list not pley for age
Gras tyme is doon my foddre is now forage 3868

My whyte top writeþ myn olde 3eeres /
Myn hert is al so moulyd as myn heeres /
And 3it I fare as doþ an open-ers
That ilke fruyt is euer lenger þe wers 3872

Til it be rote in mullok or in stree
we olde men I drede so fare we /
Til we be roten can we nat be rype
we hoppen alway whil þe world wol pype 3876

For in oure wil þer stikeþ euer a nayl
To haue an hoor heed and a greene tayl
As hath a leek for þough oure might be doon
Oure wil desireþ folye euer in oon 3880

For whan we may nat do þan wol we speke / [leaf 52]
3et in oure aisschen old is fyr I-reke /

Foure gledys haue we which I schal deuyse
Auantyng / lyng / angur coueytise 3884

This foure sparkys longen vnto eelde /
Oure olde lymes mowen be vnweelde /

But wil ne schal nat^t fayle vs þat^t is soþ
And 3et^t I haue alwey a coltes top 3888

As many a 3eer as it is passed henne
Syn þat^t my tappe of^t lyf^t bygan to renne /
For sikirlik^t whan I was born anon
Deth drough^t þe tappe of^t lyf^t and leet^t it^t goon 3892

And now so longe / haþ þe tappe I-ronne
Til þat almost^t al empty is þe tonne
The stream of^t lyf^t now droppeth on þe chymbe
The sely tonge may wel rynge and chimbe¹ 3896

Of wrecchednes þat^t passed is ful 3oore [1 ? first clymbe]
with olde folk^t / sauf^t dotage is no more

Whan þat^t oure host^t had herd oure sermonyng^t
he gan to speke as lordly as a kyng^t 3900

And seyde what^t amounteþ al þis wit
what^t schul we speke alday of^t holy wryt^t
The deuyl made a Reue for to preche
Or of^t a sowter schipman or a leche / 3904

Sey forþ þi tale and tarye nat^t þe tyme
Lo heer is Depford / and it^t is passed prime
Lo Grenewich þer many a schrewe is Inne
It^t were al tyme þi tale to bygynne 3908

Now sires quod þis Osewold þe Reue
I pray 3ow alle // þat^t noon of 3ou him greeue
Though I answere and somewhat sette his howue
For leeful is wiþ force force to showue 3912

This dronken myllere haþ I-told vs heer
how þat^t bygiled was a Carpenter
Paraurenture in scorn for I am oon
And by 3our leue I schal him quyte anoon 3916

Right^t in his cherles termes wol I speke /
I pray to God his nekke mot^t tobreke
he can wel in myn eye see a stalke [leaf 52, back]

But in his owne he can nought^t seen a balke 3920

HEre endeþ þe prologe of þe Reue
[No break in the MS.]

And here bygynneþ his tale

A T Trompyngtoun nat' fer fro Cantebrigge
 Ther goth a brook' and ouer þat a brigge
 Vpon þe whiche brook' þer stant' a melle
 And þis is verray soþ þat I ȝou telle / 3924
 A meller was þer dwellyng many a day
 As eny Pecok' he was prowde and gay
 Pipen he coude and fissh and nettys beete
 And turne cuppes wrastle wel and scheete 3928
 Ay by his belt' he bar a long' panade
 And of a swerd ful trenchaunt' was þe blade
 A Ioly popper bar he in his pouche
 Ther was no man for perel durst' him touche / 3932
 A Scheffeld thwitel bar he in his hose
 Round was his face and camois was his nose
 As pyled as an ape was his skulle/
 he was a market' beter at' þe fulle 3936
 Ther durste no wight' hand vpon him legge
 That' he ne swor anon he schuld abegge /
 A þeeft' he was for-soþ of corn and mele
 And þat a sleigh and vsyng' for to stele / 3940
 his name was hoote deynous Symekyn
 A wyf' he hadde / come of noble kyn
 The parsoun of the toun hir fader was
 with hire he ȝaf ful many a panne of bras 3944
 For þat Symkyn schuld in his blood allye
 Sche was I-fostryd in a Nonnerye
 For Symkyn wolde no wyf' as he sayde
 But' sche were wel I-norissched and a mayde / 3948
 To sauen his estaat' and ȝomanrye
 And sche was proud and pert/ as is a pye
 A ful fair sighte was þer on hem two /
 On haly dayes biforn hir wolde he go 3952

with his typet^t ybounde aboute his heed
 And sche cam affir in a gyte of^t reed
 And Symkyn hadde hosen of^t þe same / [leaf 53]
 Ther durste no wight^t clepe hir but^t ma dame / 3956
 was noon so hardy walkyng^t by þe weye
 That^t with hir dorste rage or elles pleye
 But^t if he wold be slayn of^t Symekyn[·]
 wiþ panade or with knyft^t or boydekyn[·] 3960
 For gelous folk^t ben perilous eueremo
 Algate þey wolde here wyues wende so
 And eek^t for sche was somdel smoterlich
 Sche was as deyne as water in a dich 3964
 As ful of^t hokir and of^t bissemare
 hir thoughte ladyes oughten hir to spare /
 what^t for hir kynreed and hir nortelrye
 That^t sche had lerned in þe Nonnerye 3968
 A douȝter hadden þey betwix hem two
 Of^t .xx.^{ti} ȝeer wiþouten eny mo
 Sauyng^t a child that^t was of^t half^t ȝer age
 In cradil lay and was a proper page / 3972
 This wenche pikke and wel I-growen was
 wiþ Camoys nose and eyȝen gray as glas /
 And buttockes brode and brestes round and hye
 But^t right^t fair was hir heer I wol nat^t lye / 3976
 The parsoun of^t þe toun for sche was feir
 In purpos was to maken hir his heir /
 Boþe of^t his catel / and his mesuage /
 And straunge made it of^t hir mariage 3980
 his purpos was to bystow hir hye
 In to som worþy blood of^t ancetrye
 For holy chirche good moot^t be despendid
 On holy chirche blood þat^t is descendid 3984
 Therefore he wolde his Ioly blood honoure /
 Though^t þat^t he schulde holy chirche deuoure
G Ret^t soken had þis meller oute of doute
 with whete and malt^t of^t al þe lond aboute 3988

And namely þer was a gret Colledge
 Men clepe it þe Soler haß of Cantebregge
 Ther was here whete and eek here malt I-grounde /
 And on a day it happed on a stounde / 3992
 Syk lay þe mauncyple on a maledye [leaf 53, back]
 Men wenden wisly þat he schulde dye
 For which þis meller stal both mele & corn
 A þousend part more þan byforn 3996
 For þer biforn he stal but curteysly
 But now he is a þeeß outrageously
 For which þe wardeyn chidde and made fare
 But ther of sette þe meller not a tare 4000
 he crakked boost and swor it was nat so
 Thanne weren þere poore scoleres tuo
 That dwelten in þe halle of which I seye
 Testyf þey were and lusty for to pleye 4004
 And oonly for here mirþe and reuelrye¹ [¹ the 1 is later]
 Vppon þe wardeyn bysily þey crye
 To ȝeue hem leue but a litel stounde /
 To go to melle and see here corn I-grounde 4008
 And hardily þey dursten ley here nekke /
 The meller schuld nat stel hem half a pekke
 Of corn by sleighte ne by force hem reue
 And atte last þe wardeyn ȝaf hem leue 4012
 Iohn hight þat oon and Alayn hight þat oper
 Of o toun were þey born þat highte Strothir /
 Fer in þe north I can nat telle where /
 This aleyn makeþ redy al his gere 4016
 And on an hors þe sak he cast anoon
 Forþ goþ aleyn þe clerk and also Ion
 wiþ good swerd and wiþ bocler by her side
 Iohn knew þe way þat hem needith no gyde / 4020
 And at þe mylle þe sak a-down he layth
 Alayn spak first al heil Symond in faith
 how fares þy faire doughter and þy wyf
 aleyn welcome quod Symond by my lyf 4024

And Iohn also how now what do 3e heere
 By god *quod* Iohn, Symond, neede has na peere
 him falles serue himself þat has na swayn
 Or elles he is a fon as clerkes sayn 4028
 Our mancyple as I hope wil be deed
 Swa werkes ay þe wanges in his heed
 And therfore I is come and eek aleyn [leaf 54]
 To grynde oure corn and carie it / ham ageyn 4032
 I prey 3ou speed vs in al þat 3e may
 It schal be doon *quod* Symkyn by my fay
 what wol 3e do whil þat it is in hande
 By god right by þe hoper wol I stande 4036
Quod Iohn and se how þat þe corn gas Inne
 3et sawh I neuer by my fader kynne /
 how þat þe hoper waggis to and fra
 Aleyn answerde / Iohn and wiltow swa 4040
 Than wol I be by-neþe by my croun
 And se how þat þe mele fallys down
 In to þe trouȝh þat schal be my desport /
 For Ion in faith I may be of 3our sort 4044
 I is as ille a meller as ere 3e
 This mellere smyleth for here nycete
 And þought al þis is docn but for a wyle
 They wenen þat no man may hem bigile 4048
 But by my þrift 3et schal I blere here ye
 For al here sleight and al here philosophie /
 The more queynte knakkes þat þey make /
 The more wol I stele whan I take 4052
 In stede of mele 3et wol I 3eue hem bren
 The grettest clerkes beþ not wisest men
 As whilom to þe wolf þus spak þe mare
 Of al hert art ne counte I nat a tare 4056
 Out at þe dore he goth ful pruyly
 whan þat he saugh his tyme sotyly
 he lokep vp and down til he hath founde
 The Clerkes hors þer as it stood I-bounde / 4060

Behynde þe mylle vnder a leuesel
 And to þe hors he goþ him faire and wel
 He strepeth of þe bridel right' anoon
 And whan þe hors was loos he gan to goon 4064
 Toward þe fen þere wilde mares renne
 For wiþ wihe / þurgh þikke and eek' þurgh þenne
 This meller goth agayn and no word seyde
 But' doth his note and wiþ þe clerkes pleyde / 4068
 Til þat' her corn was fair and wel I-grounde [*leaf 54, back*]
 And whan þe mele was sakked and I-bounde /
 This Iohn goþ out' and fynt his hors a-way
 And gan to crye harrow and weylaway 4072
 Oure hors is lost' aleyn for goddes banes
 Step on þy feet' cum on man al at anes
 Aleyn þour wardeyn haþ his parfray lorn
 This aleyn al forgeteþ mele and corn 4076
 Al was out' of his mynd his housbondrye
 what' wikked way is he gan gan he crye
 The wyf' cam lepyng' inward wiþ a ren
 Sche seyde allas þour hors goþ to þe fen 4080
 wiþ wylde mares as fast' as he may go /
 vnþank' come on his heed þat' band him so /
 And he þat' bettir schuld han knyht' þe Reyne
 Allas quod Iohan aleyn / for cristes peyne 4084
 Leg' doun þi swerd and I sal myn alswe /
 I is ful wighht' god wat' as is a Ra
 By goddes hart/ he sal nat' scape vs bathe
 why nad þou put þe capil in þe lathe 4088
 Ilhail aleyn by god þou is a fon
 This sely clerkes speeden hem anoon
 Toward þe fen boþe aleyn and eek' Ion
 And whan þe myller sawh þat' þey were gon 4092
 he half' a busshel of þe flour haþ take
 And bad his wyf' go knede it in a cake
 he seyde I trowe þe clerkes ben a ferd
 3et' can a Miller make a clerkes berd 4096

For al his art/ 3e lat' hem go here way
 lo wher þey goon // 3e lat' þe children play
 They get' hym nat' so lightly by my crown
 This seely clerkes ronnen vp and down 4100
 wiþ keep / keep. stand stand Iossa ware derere
 Ga wightly þou and I sal keep him heere /
 But' schortly til þat' it was verray night' /
 They cowde nat' þough þey did al here might' 4104
 here capil cacche it ran away so fast' /
 Til in a diche þey caught' / him atte last/
 wery and wete as bestys in þe Reyn [leaf 55]
 Comth sely Iohn and wiþ him comþ aleyn 4108
 Allas quod Iohn þat' day þat' I was born
 Now are we dryue til heping' and to scorn
 Oure corn is stole men woln vs foles calle /
 Bathe þe wardeyn and eek' our felaws alle / 4112
 And namely þe myller weyloway
 Thus pleyneth Iohn as he goþ by þe way
 Toward þe mylle and bayard in his hand
 The myller sitting' by þe fyr he fand 4116
 For it' was night' and forþer might' þey nought'
 But' for þe loue of god þey him bisought
 As herberwh and of ese as for her peny
 þe myller sayd agayn if' þer be eny 4120
 Swich as it' is 3it' schul 3e haue 3our part
 Myn hous is streyt. / but' 3e han lerned art/
 3e conne by argumentes make a place
 A myle brood of' twenty foote of' space / 4124
 let se now if' þis place may suffyse
 Or make it' rom wiþ speche as is 3our gyse
 Now Symond seyde þis Iohn by seynt' Cuthberd
 Ay is þou mery and þat is fair answerd 4128
 I haue herd say men suld take of' twa þinges
 Slik' as he fynt' / or tak' slik' as he bringes
 But' specially I pray þe host' ful deere
 Get' vs som mete and drynk' and mak' vs cheere 4132

And we wol paye trewly at þe fulle
 wiþ empty hand men may na hawkes tulle
 Lo heer our siluer redy for to spende
 This meller in to toun his doughter sende 4136
 For ale and breed and rosted hem a goos
 And band her hors he schold no more go loos
 And in his owne chambir hem made a bed
 with schetys and with chalouns fair I-sprede 4140
 Nat' from his owen bed ten foot' or twelue /
 his doughter had a bed al by hir selue
 Right' in þe same chambre by and by
 Hit mighte be no bet' and cause why / 4144
 Ther was no rommer herberw in þe place [leaf 55, back]
 They sowpen and þey speke hem to solace
 And dronken euer strong' ale atte beste
 Aboute mydnyght' wente þey to reste 4148
 wel hap þe myller vernysshed his heed
 Ful pale he was for dronken and nat reed
 he 3oxeth and he spekeþ þurgh þe nose /
 As he were on þe quakke or on þe pose / 4152
 To bed he goþ and wiþ him goþ his wyf'
 As eny Iay sche light' was and iolyf'
 So was his ioly whistel wel y-wet
 The cradil at hire beddes feet' is set 4156
 To rokken and to 3iue þe child to souke /
 And whan þat' dronken was al in þe crouke
 To bedde went the douzter right' anon
 To bedde goþ aleyn and also Ion 4160
 Ther nas no more him needed no dwale
 This meller hap so wysly bibbed ale /
 That' as an hors he snortith in his sleep
 Ne of his tayl bihynd took / he no keep 4164
 his wyf' burdoun a ful strong'
 Men might' her rowtyng' heeren a forlong'
 The wenche routeþ eek' par companye
 Aleyn þe clerk' pat herd þis melodye 4168

He pokyd Iohn / and seyde slepistow
 Herdistow euer slik' a sang' er now
 Lo slik' a couplyng' is betwix hem alle
 A wilde fyr vpon þair bodyes falle 4172
 wha herkned euer swilk' a ferly þing' /
 3e þei sul haue þe flour of' ille endyng'
 This lange night' þer tydes me na rest'
 But' 3et' na fors al sal be for þe best' 4176
 For Iohn sayd he as euer mot' I pryue
 If' þat' I may 3one wenche sal I swyue
 Som esement haþ lawe schapen vs
 For Iohn þer is a lawe þat says þus 4180
 That if' a man in a poynt be agreued
 That in anoþer he sal be releued
 Oure corn is stoln soply it' is na nay
 And we haue had an ylle fitt' to day 4184
 And syn I sal haue nan amendement
 Agayn my los I wol haue esement /
 By godde sale it' sal nan oþer be /
 This Iohn answerd / aleyn auyse þe 4188
 The Miller is a parlous man he sayde
 And if' þat' he out' of' his sleep abrayde
 he mighte do vs boþe a vilonye
 Aleyn answerd I count it' nat' a flye 4192
 And vp he roos and by þe wenche crepte
 This wenche lay vpright' and faste slepte
 Til he so neih was or sche might' aspye
 That it had ben to late for to crye 4196
 And schortly for to seye þey weren at oon
 Now pley aleyn for I wol speke of' Ion
 ¶ This Iohn lith stille a forlong' whyle or two
 And to him self' compleyned of' his woo 4200
 Allas quod he þis is a wikked Iape /
 Now may I say þat I am but' an ape
 3et' haþ my felaw somwat' for his harm
 he haþ þe myllers doughter in his arm 4204

¶ Qui in vno grauatur
in alio debet releuari

[leaf 56]

he aunted him and has his needes sped
 And I lye as a draf sak' in my bed
 And when þis Iape is tald anoþer day
 I sal be held a daf' a cokenay 4208
 ·vnhardy is vnsely as men saith
 I wol arise and aunte it in good faip
 And vp he ros and softely he wente /
 vnto þe cradil and in his hand it hente 4212
 And bar it softe vnto his beddis feet
 Soone after þis þe wyf' hir routyng' leet /
 And gan awake and went' hir for to pisse
 And cam agayn and gan hir cradel mysse 4216
 And groped heer and þer but' sche fond noon
 Allas quod sche / I had almost' mys goon
 I had almost' goon to þe clerkes bed
 Ey bendicite þan had I foule I-sped 4220
 And forþ sche goþ til sche þe cradil fand [leaf 56, back]
 Sche gropith alway forther with hir hand
 And fand þe bed and þoughte nat' but' good
 By cause þat' þe cradil by hit' stood 4224
 Nat' knowyng' wher sche was for it' was derk'
 But' fair and wel sche creep in to þe clerk'
 And lith ful stille and wolde han caught' a sleep
 wipinne a while Iohn þe clerk' vp leep 4228
 And on this goode wyf' leyþ on ful sore
 So mery a fytt/ ne hadd sche nat' ful ȝore
 he prikeþ harde and deepe as he were mad
 This Ioly lyf' han þis tway clerkes had 4232
 Til þat' þe þridde cok' bygan to synge
 Aleyn wax wery in þe dawenyng
 For he had swonken al þe longe night/
 And seyð far wel malyn my sweete wight 4236
 The day is come I may no lenger byde /
 But' euermo wher so I go or ryde
 I am þin owen clerk' so haue I seel
 Now deere lemman quod sche go far wel 4240

But or þou go o thing I wol þe telle
 whan þat þou wendist homward by þe melle
 Right at þe entre of þe dore byhynde
 Thou schalt a cake of half a busshel fynde 4244
 That was I-maked of þyn owen mele
 Which þat I hilp myn owen self to stele
 And goode lemman god þe saue and kepe
 And wiþ þat word almost sche gan to weepe 4248
A leyn vprist and þought er þat it dawe
 I wol go crepen in by my felawe
 And fand þe cradil wiþ his hand anon
 By god þought he al wrong I haue I-goon 4252
 My heed is toty of my swynk to nyght
 That / makes me þat I ga nouȝt aright
 I wot wel by þe cradel I haue mys go
 heer lith þe myller and his wyf also 4256
 Forþ he goþ in twenty deuelway
 vnto þe bed þer as þe Miller lay
 he wende haue crope by his felaw Ion [leaf 57]
 And by þe myller in he creep anon 4260
 And caught him by þe nekke and soft he spak
 And seyde Ion þou swyneshed awak
 For cistes sowle and here a noble game
 For by þat lord þat cleped is seynt Iame 4264
 As I haue pries in þis schorte night
 Swyued þe myllers douȝter bolt vpright
 whiles þou hast as a coward ben agast
 3e false harlot quod þis mellere hast/ 4268
 A false traitour false clerk quod he
 Thou schalt be deed by goddes dignite
 who durste be so bold to disparage
 My doughter þat is com of hih lynage / 4272
 And by þe prote-bolle he caught aleyn
 And he hent him dispitously ageyn
 And on þe nose he smot him with his fest
 Doun ran þe bloody stream vpon his brest 4276

And in þe floor wiþ nose and mouþ to-broke
 They walweden as pigges in a poke
 And vpon þay goon and down þey goon anon
 Til þat þe Millner stumbled at a ston 4280
 And doun he felle / bakward on his wyf
 That wyste noþing of þis nyce stryf
 For sche was falle a sleepe a litel wight
 wiþ Ion þe Clerik þat waked al þe night 4284
 And wiþ þe falle right out of slepe sche brayde
 help holy croys of Bromholme sche sayde
 In manus tuas lord to þe I calle /
 Awake Symond þe feend is in þin halle 4288
 My hert is broken help I am but deed
 Ther lythe vpon my wombe and on myn heed
 Help Symkyn for þis false clerkes fighþ
 This Iohn stert vp as fast as euer he might 4292
 And grasped by þe walles to and fro
 To fynde a staf & sche sturt vp also
 And knewe þe estres bet þan dede Ion
 And by þe wal sche took a staf anon 4296
 And sawh a litel glymeryng of light [leaf 87, back]
 For at an hool in schon þe moone light
 And by þat light she saugh hem boþe two
 But sikirly sche wiste nat who was who 4300
 But sche saugh a whit þing in hir ye
 And whan sche gan þis white þing aspye
 Sche wend þe clerk had wered a volupeer
 And wiþ a staf sche drough hir neer and neer 4304
 And wend haue hit þis Aleyn atte fulle
 And smot þis meller on þe piled sculle
 And doun he goþ and cryeþ harrow I dye
 This clerkes beeten him wel and leet him lye 4308
 And greyth hem wel and take her hors anon
 And eek/ here mele and hoom anon þey goon
 And at the Millen dore þey tok here cake
 Of half a buisschel flour ful wel I-bake 4312

Thus is þe prowde Miller wel I-bete
 And hap I-lost' þe gryndyng' of' þe whete /
 And payed for þe soper euerydel
 Of' aleyn and of' Iohn þat' beten him wel 4316
 His wyf' is swyued and his doughter als
 Lo such it' is a Miller to be fals
 And þerto þis prouerbe is seyð ful soþ
 he þar nat' weene wel þat' euyl doþ 4320
 A gylour schal him self' bygiled be
 And god þat' sittest' in þy mageste
 Saue al þis compaignie gret' and smale / 4323
 Thus haue I quit' þe Miller in his tale / ¶ her' endep þe
 Reeues tale

[*Break of one line in the MS.*]

The Cook^t of^t londoun whil þe Reeue spak^t
 For Ioye he þought^t / he clawed him on þe bak^t
 ha ha quod he / for cristes passioun
 This meller haþ a scharp conclusioun / 4328
 vpon his argument of^t herburgage
 wel seyde Salomon in his langage /
 Ne bryng^t nat^t euery man in to þyn hous
 For herburgage by night^t is perilous 4332
 wel aught^t a man avised for to be
 whom þat^t he brought^t in to his pryuyte [leaf 58]
 I pray to god so gyf^t my body care /
 3if^t euer siþþe I highte hogge of^t ware 4336
 herd I better myller set^t a werke /
 he hadde a Iape of^t malice in þe derke /
 And þefore if^t 3e fouche sauf^t to heere
 But^t god forbede þat^t we stynten heere / 4340
 A tale of^t me þat^t am a pouer man
 I wol 3ow telle as wel as I kan
 A litel Iape þat^t fel in oure cite
 Oure host^t seyde I graunt it the 4344
 Now telle on Roger & loke it be good
 For many a pasteý hastow lete blood
 And many a Iakk^t of^t douer hastow sold
 That^t haþ be twyes hoot^t and twyes cold 4348
 Of^t many a pilgrym hastow cristes curs
 For þy persly þey faren 3et^t þe wors
 That^t they haue eten wiþ þe stubbil goos
 For in þy schoppe is many a flye loos 4352
 Now goode / gentil Roger by þy name /
 But^t 3it^t I pray þe be nought^t wroþ for game
 [. No gap in the MS.]
 Thow saist^t ful soþ quod Roger by my faith 4356

But soth play quad play as þe flemynge saith

[. *No gap in the MS.*]

Be thou nat wroþ or we departe her

Though þat my tale be of an hostyler 4360

But napeles I wol not telle it 3it/

But or we departe it schal be quyt/

And þer wiþ al he lowh / and made chere

And seyde his tale as 3e schal after heere 4364

[*No break in the MS.*]

A Prentys dwelled whilom in oure Citee,
 Of a craft of vitailers was he
 Gaylard he was as goldfynch in þe schawe /
 Broun as a bery and a propre felawe 4368
 wiþ lokkes blak and kempt ful fetously
 Dauncen he cowde wel and prately
 That he was cleped Perkyn reuellour
 he was ful of loue and paramour 4372
 As is þe hony combe of hony swete
 wel were þe wenche þat mighte him meete [*leaf 53, back*]
 [.]
 *No gap in the MS.* 4376

FOr whan þer eny rydyng was in cheepe /
 Out of þe schoppe þider wolde he lepe /
 Tyl he hadde al þat sight I-seyn
 And daunced wel he nold nat come ageyn 4380
 And gadred him a meyne of his sort
 To hoppe and synge and make such disport
 And þer þey setten steuene for to meete
 To pleyen atte dys in such a strete 4384
 For in þe toun ne was þer no prentys
 That fairer cowde caste a peyre dys
 Than Perkyn coupe and þerto he was free /
 Of his dispence in place of pryuyte 4388
 That fand his mayster wel in his chaffare
 For often tyme he fond his box ful bare
 For such a ioly prentys reuelour
 That haunteþ dys Reuel or paramour 4392
 his maister schal it in his schoppe abyen
 Al haue he no part of þe mynstralcyen
 For þeste and ryot be conuertible
 Al can þey pley on giterne and rubible 4396

Reuel and troupe as in a lowe degre
 They ben ful wroþ al day as 3e may see
 This Ioly Prentys with his mayster bood
 Til he was oute ney3 of his prentys hood 4400
 Al were he snybbyd boþe erly and late
 And som tyme lad with reuel in to Newgate
 But' atte laste his mayster him bythought'
 vpon a day whan he his papyr sought' 4404
 Of a prouerbe þat' siþ þis same word
 wel bette is roten appul out' of hord
 Than it' rote al þe remenaunt/
 So fareth it' by a ryotous seruauant' 4408
 hit' is ful lasse harm to late him pa:
 Than he schend al þe seruantes in þe place
 Therfore his mayster 3af' him acqueyntaunce
 And bad him go wiþ sorwe and wiþ meschaunce 4412
 And þus þe ioly prentys had his leue //
 Now let' hym ryot' al þe night' or leue.
 [*Lines 4413, 4414 form the last line of the page in the MS.*]

APPENDIX TO GROUP A.

[THE SPURIOUS TALE OF GAMELYN.]

L Itheth and lestnep and herkneþ aright [leaf 59] 1
 And 3e schul heere a talkyng^t of^t a doughty knight
 Sire Iohn of^t Boundys was his right^t name
 he cowde of/ norture ynough & mochil of^t game 4
 Thre sones þe knight^t · þat^t with his body he wan
 The eldest^t was a moche schrewe / and sone he bygan
 his breþeren loued wel here fader / and of^t him were agast /
 The eldest^t deserued his fadres curs / and had it at þe last^t / 8
 The goode kniȝt^t his fader lyuede so ȝore
 That^t deth was comen him to and handled him ful sore
 The goode knight^t cared sore . sik^t þer he lay
 how his children scholde lyuen after his day 12
 he hadde ben wyde wher . but^t non housbond he was
 Al þe lond þat^t he had / it^t was verrey purchas
 Fayn he wold it^t were dressed / amonges hem alle
 That^t ech of^t hem had his part^t / as it^t might^t falle / 16
 Tho sent^t he in to cuntre after wise knights
 To helpe delen his londes / and dresen hem to rightes
 he sent^t hem word by *lettres* / þey schulden hye blyue
 yf^t þey wolde speke with him whil he was on lyue / 20

¶ Tho þe knyghtes herden / sik^t þer he lay
 hadde þey no reste noþer night^t ne day
 Til þey comen to him þer he lay stille /
 On his deþ bedde . to abyde goddes wille 24
 þan seyde þe goode knight^t syk^t þer he lay
 lordes I 3ou warne for soþ wiþoute nay
 I may no lengere lyuen heer in þis stounde
 For þurgh goddes wille deþ draweth me to grounde 28
 Ther nas non of^t hem alle . þat^t herd him aright^t
 þat^t þey hadden reuþe of^t þat^t ilke knight^t
 And seyde sir for goddes loue ne dismay 3ou nought
 God may do bote of^t bale þat^t is now I-wrought 32
 ¶ Than spak^t þe goode knight^t sik^t þer he lay
 Boote of^t bale god may sende I wot^t it is no nay
 But^t I byseke 3ou kniztes for þe loue of^t me
 Gop and dresseþ my lond among^t my sones þre 36
 And sires for þe loue of^t god deleþ hem nat amys
 And forgetiþ nat^t Gamelyn my 3onge sone þat is
 Takeþ heed to þat on as wel as to þat^t oþer [*leaf 59, back*]
 Selde 3e see ony Eyr helpen his broþer 40
 ¶ þo leete þey þe knight^t lyen þat was nought in hele /
 And wenten in to counseil his londes for to dele /
 For to delen hem alle /. to oon þat^t was her þought^t
 And for Gamelyn was 3ongest^t / he schuld haue nouȝt 44
 Al þe lond þat^t þer was þey dalten it in two
 And leeten Gamelyn þe 3onge wiþoute lond go
 And ech of^t hem seyde to oþer ful lowde
 His breþeren might^t 3eue him lond whan he good cowde 48
 whan þey hadde deled þe lond at here wille
 þey come aȝein to þe knight^t þer he lay ful stille
 And tolden him anon-right^t / how þey hadden wrought^t
 And þe knight^t þere he lay liked it^t right^t nought^t 52
 Than seyde þe knight^t / by seynt^t Martyn
 For al þat^t 3e haue y-doon 3it is the lond myn
 For goddes loue neyhebouris stondeþ alle stille
 And I wil dele my lond / after my wille 56

Iohan myn eldeste sone / schal haue plowes fyue
 That was my fadres heritage whil he was on lyue
 And my myddeleste sone / fyf plowes of lond
 That I halp for to gete wip my right hond 60
 And al myn other purchas / of londes and leedes
 þat I byqueþe gamelyn / and alle my goode steedes
 And I byseke þow goode men þat lawe comne of londe
 For Gamelynes loue þat my queste stonde 64
 Thus dalte þe knight his lond by his day
 Right on his deþ bed / sik þer he lay
 And sone aftirward he lay stoon stille /
 And deyde whan tyme com / as it was cristes wille 68
 And anon as he was deed and vnder gras I-graue /
 Sone þe elder broþer gyled þe þonge knaue
 He took in to his hond / his lond as his leede
 And Gamelyn himsele / to clothen and to feede 72
 He clothed him and fed him yuel and eek wroþe
 And leet his londes forfare and his houses boþe
 his parkes and his woodes / and dede noþing wel
 And seþþen he it aboutht on his faire fel 76
 So longe was Gamelyn in his broþeres halle [leaf 60]
 For þe strengest of good wil þey doutiden him alle /
 þer was non þer Inne nowþer þong ne olde
 That wolde wrappe Gamelyn were he neuer so bolde / 80
 Gamelyn stood on a day in his broþeres 3erde
 And bygan wip his hond to handlen his berde
 he þought on his londes þat layen vnsawe
 And his faire Okes þat doun were I-drawe 84
 his parkes were I-broken / and his deer byreeued
 Of alle his goode steedes noon was him byleued
 his howses were vnhiled / and ful yuel dight
 Tho þoughte Gamelyn it wente nought aright 88
 Afterward cam his broþer walkynge þare
 And seyde to Gamelyn is our mete 3are /
 Tho wrapped him gamelyn and swor by goddes book
 Thou schalt go bake þi self / I wil nouzt be þy cook 92

how broþer Gamelyn / how answerest þou now /
 þou spake neuer such a word as þou dost now /
 By my faith seyde Gamelyn now me þinkeþ neede /
 Of alle þe harmes þat I haue I tok neuer ar heede 96
 My parkes ben tobroken and my deer byreued
 Of myn armure and my steedes nought is me bileued
 Al þat my fader me byquap al goþ to schame /
 And þerfor haue þou goddes curs broþer by þy name 100
 Than byspak his broþer þat rape was of rees /
 Stond stille gadelyng / and hold right þy pees /
 Thou schalt be fayn for to haue þy mete and þy wede /
 what spekest þou Gamelyn of lond oþer of leede 104
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn þe child þat was ying
 Cristes curs mot he haue þat clepeþ me gadelyng
 I am no worse gadelyng ne no worse wight
 But born of a lady and geten of a knight 108
 Ne durst he nat to Gamelyn ner a foote go
 But clepide to him his men and seyde to hem þo
 Goþ and betep þis boy and reueþ him his wyt /
 And lat him leren anoþer tyme to answeere me bet 112
 Thanne seyde þe child ȝonge Gamelyn
 Cristes curs mot þou haue broþer art þou myn
 And if I schal algate be beten anon [leaf 60, back]
 Cristes curs mot þou haue but þou be þat oon 116
 And anon his broþer in þag grete hete
 Made his men to fette staues Gamelyn to bete
 whan þat euerich of hem / a staf had I-nome
 Gamelyn was war anon þo he seigh hem come 120
 þo gamelyn seyh hem come / he loked ouer al
 And was war of a pestel stood vnder a wal
 Gamelyn was light of foot / and þider gan he lepe
 And drof alle his broþeres men right on an hepe 124
 he loked as a wilde lyoun and leyde on good woon
 Tho his broþer say þat he bigan to goon
 he fley vp in til a loft and schette þe dore fast
 Thus Gamelyn wiþ þe pestel made hem alle agast 128

Some for Gamelynes loue / and some for his ey3e /
 Alle þey drowe by halues // þo he gan to pley3e /
 what' how now seyde Gamelyn euel mot' 3e thee
 wil 3e bygynne contek' and so sone flee / 132
 Gamelyn sought' his broþer / whider he was flowe
 And saugh wher he loked out' / at a wyndowe /
 Broþer sayde Gamelyn com a litel ner
 And I wil teche þe a play atte bokeler 136
 his broþer him answerde and swor by seynt' Rycher
 whil þe pestel is in þin hond I wil come no neer
 Broþer I wil make þy pees / I swere by cristes ore
 Cast' away þe pestel and wrappe þe nomore / 140
 I mot' neede sayde Gamelyn wrappe me at' oones
 For thou wolde make þy men to breke myne boones
 Ne had I hadde mayn and might' in myn armes
 To haue I-put' hem fro me he wolde haue do me harmes 144
 Gamelyn sayde his broþer be þou nought' wroþ
 For to seen þe haue harm it were me right' loþ
 I ne dide it nouȝt' broþer but' for a fondyng'
 For to loken or þou were strong' and art' so ying' 148
 Com a down þan to me and graunte me my bone
 Of ping' I wil þe aske / and we schul saughte sone
 Doun þan cam his broþer þat' fykil was and felle
 And was swiþe sore agast' of' þe pestelle 152
 he seyde broþer Gamelyn aske me þy boone [leaf 61]
 And loke þou me blame but' I graunte sone
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn broþer I-wys
 And we schulle ben at oon þou most' me graunte þis 156
 Al þat' my fader me byquath whil he was on lyue /
 þou most' do me it haue ȝif' we schul nat' stryue /
 That' schalt' þou haue Gamelyn I swere by cristes ore
 Al þat' pi fader the byquap þough þou woldest' haue more 160
 Thy lond þat' lȝ laye ful wel it schal be sowe
 And þyn howses reysed vp þat' ben leyd so lowe
 Thus seyde þe knight' to Gamelyn wiþ mowthe /
 And þought' eek' of' falsnes / as he wel couþe / 164

The king^t þought^t on tresoun / and Gamelyn on noon
 And went^t and kist his broþer / and whan þey were at oon
 Allas ʒonge Gamelyn noþing^t he ne wiste /
 wiþ which a false tresoun his broþer him kiste / 168

L Ipeth and lestneþ and holdeþ ʒour tonge
 And ʒe schul heere talkyng^t of^t Gamelyn þe yonge
 Ther was þer bysiden cryed a wrastlyng^t
 And þerfor þer was sette vp a Ram and a Ryng^t 172

And Gamelyn was in good wil/ to wende þerto /
 For to preuen his might^t what^t he cowþe do
 Broþer seyde Gamelyn by seynt Richer
 Thou most^t lenē me to nyȝt^t // a litel Courser 176

That^t is freisch to the spore on for to ryde
 I most^t on an Erande a litel her byside
 By god seyð his brother of^t steedes in my stalle
 Go and chese þe þe best^t and spare non of^t alle 180

Of^t steedes or of^t course þat stonden hem bisyde
 And tel me goode broþer whider þou wolt ryde
 ¶ her byside broþer is cryed a wrastlyng^t
 And þerfor schal be set^t vp a Ram and a Ryng^t 184

Moche worschip it were broþer to vs alle
 Might^t I þe Ram and þe Ryng^t bryng^t home to þis halle
 A steede þer was sadeled smertely and skeet^t
 Gamelyn did a paire spores fast^t on his feet^t 188

he set^t his foot^t in styrop / þe steede he bystrood
 And toward þe wrastelyng^t þe ʒonge child rood
 Tho Gamelyn þe yonge was ride out at^t þe gate [leaf 61, back]
 The fals kniȝt his broþer lokked it after þate 192

And bysoughte ihū crist^t þat^t is heuen kyng^t
 he mighte breke his nekke in þat^t wrastlyng^t
 As sone as Gamelyn com þer þe place was /
 he lighte down of^t his steede and stood on þe gras / 196

And þer he herd a Frankeleyn wayloway syng^t
 And bigan bitterly his hondes for to wryng^t
 Goode man seyde Gamelyn why makestow þis fare
 Is þer no man þat^t may ʒou helpe out of^t þis care 200

Allas seyde þis Frankeleyn þat' euer was I bore
 For tweye stalworþe sones / I wene þat I haue lore
 A Champioun is in þe place / þat' haþ I-wrought me sorwe
 For he haþ slayn my two sones / but' if' god hem borwe / 204
 I wold ȝeue ten pound by ihū crist' and more
 wiþ þe nones I fand a man to handil him sore
 Goode man seyde Gamelyn wilt' þou wel doon
 hold myn hors whil my man draweþ of my schoon · 208
 And help my man to kepe my cloþes and my steede /
 And I wil in to place go / to loke if' I may speede /
 By god sayde þe Frankeleyn anon it schal be doon
 I wil my self' be þy man / and drawen of' þy schoon 212
 And wende þou in to þe place / ihū crist' þe speede /
 And drede not' of' þy cloþes nor of' þy goode steede /
BArfoot' and vngert' . Gamelyn in cam
 Alle þat' weren in þe place heede of' him þey nam 216
 how he durst' aunte him of' him to doon his might'
 That' was so doughty champioun in wrastlyng' and in fight'
 vp sterte þe Champioun raply and anoon
 Toward ȝonge Gamelyn / he bigan to goon 220
 And sayde who is þy fader and who is þy sire
 For soþe þou art' a gret' fool þat' þou come hire
 Gamelyn answerde þe champioun tho
 þou knewe wel my fader / whil he couþe go 224
 whiles he was on lyue / by seint' martyn
 Sir Iohā of' Boundys was his name and I gamelyn
 Felaw seyde þe champioun al so mot I pryue
 I knew wel þy fader whil he was on lyue 228
 And þiself' Gamelyn I wil þat' þou it' heere [Leaf 62]
 whil þou were a ȝong' boy a moche schrewe þou were
 þan seyde Gamelyn and swor by cristes ore
 Now I am older woxe þou schalt' me fynd a more 232
 By god sayde þe Champioun welcome mote þou be
 Come þou ones in myn hond schalt' þou neuer þe
 It' was wel wipinne þe night' and þe moone schon
 whan Gamelyn and þe Champioun to-gider gon to goon 236

The champion caste tornes to Gamelyn þat^t was prest^t
 And Gamelyn stood stille and bad him doon his best^t
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn to þe Champion
 Thou art^t fast^t aboute to brynge me a down 240
 Now I haue I-proued many tornes of^t þyne
 Thow most^t he seyde prouen on or tuo of^t myne
 Gamelyn to þe Champion 3ede smartly anon
 Of alle þe tornes þat he cowþe he schewed him but^t oon 244
 And kast^t him on þe left syde þat^t þre ribbes tobrak^t
 And þerto his oon arm þat^t 3af^t a gret crak^t
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn smertly anoon
 Schal it^t be holde for a cast^t or elles for noon . 248
 By god seyð þe Champion wheþer þat^t it bee
 he þat comes ones in þin hand schal he neuer þee
 Than seyde þe Frankeleyn / þat had his sones þere
 Blessed be þou gamelyn þat euer þou bore were 252
 The Frankleyn seyð to þe Champion of^t him stood him noon
 This is yonge Gamelyn þat taughte þe þis pleye [eye
 A3ein ansverd the Champion þat liked no þing^t weþ
 he is a liþer mayster and his pley is ri3^t feþ 256
 Siþ I wrastled first^t / it is I-go ful 3ore
 But I was neuere my lyf^t handled so sore
 Gamelyn stood in þe place allone wiþoute serk^t
 And seyð if^t þer be eny mo lat^t hem come to werk^t 260
 The Champion þat^t peyned him to werke so sore
 It semeþ by his continuaunce þat he wil nomore
 Gamelyn in þe place / stood as stille as stoon .
 For to abyde wrastelyng^t but^t þer com noon 264
 Ther was noon with Gamelyn wolde wrastle more /
 For he handled þe Champion so wonderly sore /
 Two gentil men þer were þat^t yemede þe place [leaf 62, back]
 Comen to Gamelyn god 3eue him goode grace 268
 And sayde to him do on / þyn hosen and þy schoon
 For soþe at þis tyme þis feire is I-doon .
 And þan seyde Gamelyn so mot^t I wel fare /
 I haue nough^t 3et haluendel sold vp my ware / 272

Tho seyde þe Champioun so brouk' I my sweere
 he is a fool þat' þer of' beyeþ / þou sellest' it so deere
 Tho sayde þe Frankeleyn þat' was in moche care
 Felaw he seyde / why lakkest' þou his ware / 276
 By seynt' Iame in Galys þat' many man haþ sought'
 3et' it is to good cheep þat' þou hast' I-bought'
 Tho þat' wardeynes were of' þat' wrastlyng'
 Come and broughte Gamelyn þe Ram and þe Ryng' 280
 And seyden haue Gamelyn þe Ryng' and þe Ram
 For þe best' wrasteler þat' euer here cam .
 Thus wan Gamelyn þe Ram and þe Ryng'
 And wente wiþ moche ioye home in þe mornynge' 284
 His broþer seiþ wher he cam with þe grete rowte /
 And bad schitte þe gate and holde him wiþoute
 The porter of' his lord was ful sore agast'
 And stert' anon to þe gate and lokked it fast 288
NOW litheþ and lestneþ boþe zong' and olde
 And 3e schul heere gamen of' Gamelyn þe bolde
 Gamelyn com þerto for to haue comen In .
 And þanne was it I-schet' faste wiþ a pyn 292
 Than seyde Gamelyn porter vndo þe yate
 For many good mannes sone stondeþ þer-ate
 Than answerd þe porter and swor by goddes berd
 Thow ne schalt' Gamelyn come in to þis 3erde 296
 Thow lixt' sayde Gamelyn so browke I my chyn
 he smot' þe wyket' wiþ his foot' and brak' away þe pyn
 The porter seyþ þo it might' no better be
 He sette foot' on erþe he bigan to flee 300
 By my faip seyde Gamelyn þat' trauail is I-lore
 For I am of' foot' as light as þou pough þou haddest swore
 Gamelyn ouertook' þe porter and his teene wrak'
 And gert' him in þe nekke þat' þe bon tobrak' 304
 And took' him by þat' oon arm and þrew him in a welle [cf. 63]
 Seuē fadmen it was deep . as I haue herd telle /
 whan Gamelyn þe yonge þus hadde pleyd his play
 Alle þat' in þe 3erde were drewē hem a way 308

þey dredden him ful sore for werkes þat he wrouȝte
 And for þe faire company þat he þider broughte
 Gamelyn ȝede to þe gate / and leet it vp wyde
 he leet in alle maner men þat gon in wold or ryde 312
 And seyde ȝe be welcome wipouten eny greeue /
 For we wiln be maistres heer / and aske no man leue /
 ȝestirday I lefte / seyde ȝonge Gamelyn ·
 In my broþer Seller .v. tonne of wyn 316
 I wil not þat þis compaignye parten a-twynne /
 And ȝe wil doon after me while eny sope is þrynnē
 And if my broþer grucche or make foul cheere 319
 Oþer for spense of mete or drynk þat we spenden heere /
 I am oure catour / and bere oure aller purs /
 he schal haue for his grucchyng seint maries curs
 My broþer is a nyggoun / I swer by cristes ore
 And we wil spende largely þat he haþ spared ȝore / 324
 And who þat makeþ grucchyng / þat we here dwelle
 he schal to þe porter in to þe draw-welle
 vij. dayes and .vij. nyght Gamelyn held his feste
 with moche myrþ and solas / þat was þer and no cheste / 328
 In a litel toret his brother lay I-steke
 And sey hem wasten his good but durst he not speke
 Erly on a mornyng on þe viij^e day
 The gestes come to Gamelyn and wolde gon here way 332
 Lordes seyde Gamelyn / wil ȝe so hye
 Al þe wyn is not ȝet y-dronke so brouk I myn ye
 Gamelyn in his herte was he ful wo
 whan his gestes took her leue from him for to go 336
 he wold þey had lenger abide / and þey seyde nay
 But bitaughte Gamelyn god and good day
 Thus made Gamelyn his fest / and brought it wel to ende
 And after his gestys took leue to wende 340
Litheþ and lestneþ and holdeþ ȝoure tonge
 And ȝe schul heere gamen of Gamelyn þe ȝonge /
 herkneþ lordynges and lesteneþ aright [leaf 63, back]
 whan alle gestes were goon how Gamelyn was dight 344

Al þe whil þat Gamelyn heeld his mangerye
 his broþer þought on him be wreke / wiþ his treccherie
 Tho Gamelyns gestes were riden and I-goon
 Gamelyn stood allone frendes had he noon 348
 Tho after ful soone wipinne a litel stounde
 Gamelyn was I-take and ful hard I-bounde
 Forþ com þe fals knight out of þe selleer
 To Gamelyn his broþer he zede ful neer 352
 And sayde to Gamelyn who made þe so bold
 For to stroye my stoor of myn houshold
 Broþer seyde Gamelyn wrappe þe right nouzt
 For it is many day I-gon siþþen it was bouzt 356
 For broþer þou hast I-had by seynt richer
 Of xv. plowes of lond þis .xvj. 3er
 And of alle þe beestes þou hast forþ bred
 That my fader me biquath on his deth bed 360
 Of al þis xvj. 3eer I zeue þe þe prōw
 For þe mete and þe drynk þat we haue spende now /
 Thanne seyde þe fals knyzt euel mot he the
 Herkne broþer Gamelyn what I wol zeue þe 364
 For of my body broþer geten heir haue I noon
 I wil make þe myn heir I swere by seint Iohn
 Par ma foy sayd Gamelyn and if it so be
 And þou þenke as þou seyst god zelde it þe 368
 No þing wiste Gamelyn of his broþeres gyle
 Therfore he him bigyled in a litel while
 Gamelyn seyde he o thing / I þe telle
 Tho þou þrewe my porter in þe draw-welle 372
 I swor in þat wrappe and in þat grete moot
 That þou schuldest be bounde boþe hand and foot
 Therfore I þe biseche brother Gamelyn
 Lat me nouht be forsworn broþer art þou myn 376
 lat me bynde þe now boþe hand and feet
 For to holde myn avow as I þe biheet
 Broþer sayde Gamelyn also mot I þe
 Thou schalt not be forsworen for þe loue of me 380

Tho made þey Gamelyn to sitte might' he nat' stonde [leaf 64]
 Til þey had him bounde boþe foot' and honde /
 The fals knight' his broþer of' Gamelyn was agast'
 And sent' aftir feteres to feteren him fast' 384
 His broþer made lesynges on him þer he stood
 And told hem þat' comen In þat' Gamelyn was wood
 Gamelyn stood to a post' bounden in þe halle /
 Tho þat' comen in þer loked on him alle / 388
 Euer stood Gamelyn euen vpright'
 But' mete ne drynk' had he non neiþer day ne night
 Than seyde Gamelyn broþer by myn hals
 Now I haue aspied þou art' a party fals / 392
 had I wist' þat' tresoun þat' þou haddest' y-founde
 I wolde haue ȝeue þe strokes or I had be bounde /
 Gamelyn stood bounden stille as eny stoon'
 Two dayes and two nightes mete had he noon 396
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn þat' stood y-bounde stronge /
 Adam Spencer me þinkþ I faste to longe
 Adam Spencer now I byseche þe
 For þe mochel loue my fader loued þe/ 400
 yf' þou may come to þe keyes lese me out' of' bond
 And I wil parte wiþ þe of' my free lond
 Thanne seyde adam þat' was þe Spencer
 I haue serued þy broþer þis xvj. ȝeer 404
 If I leete þe goon out' of' his bour
 he wolde say afterward I were a traytour
 Adam sayde Gamelyn so brouk' I myn hals
 þou schalt' fynde my broþer atte laste fals 408
 Therfor broþer adam louse me out' of' bond
 And I wil parte wiþ þe of' my free lond
 vp swich a forward seyde adam I-wys
 I wil do þerto al þat' in me is 412
 Adam seyde Gamelyn al so mot' I þe
 I wol hold þe couenaunt' and þou wil me
 Anon as adames lord to bedde was I-goon
 Adam took' þe keyes and leet' gamelyn out' anoon 416

He vnlokked Gamelyn boþe hand and feet
 In hope of auauncement þat he him byheet
 Than seyde Gamelyn þanked be goddes sonde [leaf 64, back]
 Now I am loosed boþe foot and honde / 420
 had I now eten and dronken aright
 Ther is noon in þis hous schulde bynde me þis night
 Adam took Gamelyn as stille as ony stoon
 And ladde him into spence rapely and anon 424
 And sette him to soper right in a priue stede
 he bad him do gladly and Gamelyn so dede
 Anon as gamelyn hadde eten wel & fyn
 And þerto y-dronke wel of þe rede wyn 428
 Adam seyde Gamelyn what is now þy reed
 wher I go to my broþer and girde of his heed
 Gamelyn seyde adam it schal not be so
 I can teche þe a reed þat is worþ þe two 432
 I wot wel for soþe þat þis is no nay
 we schul haue a mangery right on sonday
 Abbotes and priours many heer schal be
 And oþer men of holy chirche as I telle þe / 436
 Thow schalt stonde vp by þe post as þou were hond-fast/
 And I schal leue hem vnloke away þou may hem cast
 whan þat þey haue eten and waisschen here hondes
 Thou schalt biseke hem alle to bryng þe out of bondes 440
 And if þey wille borwe þe þat were good game
 Then were þou out of prisoun and I out of blame
 And if euerich of hem say vnto vs nay
 I schal do anoþer I swere by þis day 444
 Thou schalt haue a good staf and I wil haue anoþer
 And cristes curs haue þat oon þat faileþ þat oþer
 3e for gode seyde Gamelyn I say it for me
 If I fayle on my syde yuel mot I þe 448
 If we schul algate assoile hem of here synne
 warne me broþer adam whan I schal bygynne
 Gamelyn seyde adam by seynte charite
 I wil warne þe byforn whan þat it schal be 452

whan I twynk' on þe loke for to goon
 And cast' away þe feteres and com to me anon.
 Adam seide Gamelyn blessed be þy bones
 That' is a good counseil ȝeuyng' for þe nones 456
 If þey werne me þanne to brynge me out' of' bendes [leaf 65]
 I wol sette goode strokes right' on here lendes
 Tho þe sonday was I-come and folk' to þe feste /
 Faire þey were welcomed boþe lest' and meste 460
 And euer as þey atte halle/ dore comen In.
 They caste þeir eye on ȝonge Gamelyn
 The fals knight' his broþer ful of' trechery
 Alle þe gestes þat' þer wer atte mangery 464
 Of' Gamelyn his broþer he tolde hem with mouþe
 Al þe harm and þe schame þat he telle couþe
 Tho þey were serued Of' messes tuo oþer þre
 Than seyde Gamelyn how serue ȝe me 468
 It' is nouȝt' wel serued by god þat al made
 That' I sytte fastyng' and oþer men make glade
 The fals knight' his broþer þer þat he stood
 Tolde alle his gestes þat Gamelyn was wood 472
 And Gamelyn stood stille and answerde nouȝt'
 But adames wordes he held in his þough't /
 Tho Gamelyn gan speke dolfully wiþ alle /
 To þe grete lordes þat' saten in þe halle 476
 lordes he seyde for cristes passioun
 helpeþ brynge Gamelyn out' of' prisoun
 Than seyde an abbot' sorwe on his cheeke
 he schal haue cristes curs and seynte maries eeke 480
 That' þe out' of' prisoun beggeþ oþer borwe
 But euer worthe hem wel þat' doþ þe moche sorwe
 After þat' abbot þan spak' anoþer
 I wold þin heed were of' þough þou werȝ my broþer 484
 Alle þat' þe borwe / foule mot hem falle
 Thus þey seyde alle þat' were in þe halle
 Than seyde a priour yuel mot' he þryue
 It' is moche skape boy þat' þou art' on lyue 488

Ow . seyde Gamelyn so brouk^t I my bon
 Now I haue aspyed þat^t freendes haue I non
 Cursed mot^t he worþe boþe fleisch and blood
 That^t euer do Priour or abbot ony good 492
 Adam þe Spencer took^t vp þe cloþ
 And loked on Gamelyn and say þat^t he was wroth
 Adam on þe pantrye litel he þought^t / [leaf 65, back]
 But^t tuo goode staues to haß dore he brouzt 496
 Adam loked on Gamelyn and he was war anoon
 And cast^t away þe feteres and he bigan to goon
 Tho he com to adæm he took^t þat^t oo staf^t
 And bygan to worche and goode strokes zaft^t 500
 Gamelyn cam into þe halle and þe spencer boþe
 And loked hem aboute as þey had be wroþe
 Gamelyn sprengþ holywater wiþ an Oken spire ./
 That^t some þat^t stooðe vpright^t fel in þe fire 504
 Ther was no lewede man þat^t in þe halle stood
 That^t wolde do Gamelyn eny þing^t but^t good
 But^t stood besyde and leet^t hem boþe werche
 For þey hadde no rewþe of^t men of^t holy cherche 508
 Abbot^t or priour monk^t or Chanoun
 That^t Gamelyn ouertok^t anon þey 3eeden doun
 Ther was non of^t hem alle þat^t wiþ his staf^t mette
 That^t he made him ouerþrowe and quyt^t him his dette 512
 Gamelyn seyde adam for seynte charite
 Pay large lyuerey for þe loue of^t me
 And I wil kepe þe dore so euer here I masse /
 Er þey ben assoyled þere schan noon passe 516
 Dowt^t þe nought^t seyde Gamelyn whil we ben in feere
 kep þou wel þe dore / and I wol werche heere
 Stere þe good adam and lat þer noon flee
 And we schul telle largely how many þer be 520
 Gamelyn seyde adam do hem but good
 þey ben men of^t holy chirche / draw of^t hem no blood
 Saue wel þe croune and do hem non harmes
 But^t brek^t boþe her legges and sippen here armes 524

Thus Gamelyn and adam wroughte right fast
 And pleyden wiþ þe monkes and made hem agast
 Thider þey come rydyng iolily wiþ swaynes
 And hom aȝen þey were I-lad in cartes and in waynes 528
 Tho þey hadden al y-don þan seyde a gray frere
 Allas sire abbot what dide we now heere
 Tho þat comen hider it was a cold reed
 vs hadde ben better at home wiþ water and breed 532
 Whil Gamelyn made ordres of monkes and frere / [leaf 66]
 Euer stood his broþer and made foul chere /
 Gamelyn vp wiþ his staf þat he wel knew
 And gert/ him in þe nekke þat he ouerþrew 536
 Alitel aboue þe girdel þe Riggebon tobarst/
 And sette him in þe feteres þer he sat arst
 Sitte þer broþer sayde Gamelyn
 For to colyn þy blood as I dide myn 540
 As swiþe as þey hadde / I-wroken hem on here foon
 They askeden watir and wisschen anoon.
 what some for here loue and some for awe /
 Alle þe seruantz serued hem of þe beste lawe / 544
 The scherreuē was þennes but a fyue myle
 And al was y-told him in a litel while
 How Gamelyn and adam had doon a sory rees
 Bounden and I-wounded men aȝein þe kinges pees 548
 Tho bigan sone strif for to wake /
 And þe scherref aboute Gamelyn for to take /
Now lythep and lestnep so god ȝif ȝou goode fyn
 And ȝe schul heere good game of ȝonge Gamelyn 552
 Four and twenty ȝonge men þat heelden hem ful bolde
 Come to þe schirref and seyde þat þey wolde /
 Gamelyn and adam fetten away
 The scherref ȝaf hem leue soþ as I ȝou say 556
 They hyeden faste wold þey nought bylynne /
 Til þey come to þe ȝate þer Gamelyn was Inne
 They knocked on þe gate þe porter was ny
 And loked out at an hol as man þat was sly 560

The porter hadde byholde hem a litel while /
 he loued wel Gamelyn and was adrad of gyle
 And leet þe wyket stonden y-steke ful styлле
 And asked hem wiþoute what was here wille 564
 For al þe grete company þanne spak but oon
 Vndo þe gate porter and lat vs in goon
 Than seyde þe porter so brouke I my chyn
 3e schul sey 3our erand er 3e comen In 568
 Sey to Gamelyn and adam if here wille be
 we wil speke wiþ hem wordes two or þre
 Felaw seyde þe porter stond þere stille [leaf 66, back]
 And I wil wende to Gamelyn to witen his wille 572
 In went þe porter to Gamelyn anoon
 And seyde sir I warne 3ou her ben come 3our foon
 The scherreues meyne ben atte gate /
 For to take 3ou boþe schul 3e na skape / 576
 Porter seyde Gamelyn so moot I wel þe /
 I wil allowe þe þy wordes whan I my tyme se
 Go agayn to þe 3ate and dwel wiþ hem a while
 And þou schalt se right sone porter a gyle 580
 Adam sayde Gamelyn looke þe to goon
 we haue foomen atte gate and frendes neuer oon
 It ben þe schirrefes men þat hider ben I-come /
 They ben swore to-gidere þat we schul be nome / 584
 Gamelyn seyde adam hye þe right blyue /
 And if I faile þe þis day euel mot I pryue
 And we schul so welcome þe scherreues men
 That som of hem schul make here beddes in þe den 588
 Atte posterne gate Gamelyn out went /
 And a good cart staf in his hand he hente
 Adam hente sone anoper gret staf
 For to helpe Gamelyn and goode strokes 3af 592
 Adam felde tweyne and Gamelyn felde þre
 The oþer setten feet on erþe and bygonne fle
 what seyde adam so euer here I masse
 I haue a draught of good wyn / drynk er 3e passe / 596

Nay by god sayde þay / þy drynk't is not' good
 It' wolde make mannes brayn to lien in his hood
 Gamelyn stood stille and loked him aboute
 And seih þe scherreue come with a gret' route / 600
 Adam seyde Gamelyn what' be now þy reedes
 Here comþ þe scherreue and wil haue oure heedes
 Adam sayde Gamelyn my reed is now þis
 Abide we no lenger lest' we fare amys 604
 I rede þat' we to wode goon ar þat' we be founde
 Better is vs þer loos þan in town y-bounde /
 Adam took' by þe hond 3onge Gamelyn
 And euerich of' hem tuo drank' a draught' of' wyn · 608
 And after took' her coursers and wenten her way [leaf 67]
 Tho fond þe scherreue nest' but non ay
 The scherreue lighte a-down and went' in to þe halle /
 And fond þe lord y-fetered faste wiþ alle/ 612
 The scherreue vnfetered him sone and þat' anoon
 And sent' after a leche to hele his rigge boon
Lete we now þis fals knight'. Iyen in his care
 And talke we of' Gamelyn and loke how he fare 616
 Gamelyn in to þe woode stalkede stille
 And adam þe Spenser liked ful ylle /
 Adam swor to Gamelyn by seynt' Richer
 Now I see it' is mery to be a Spencer 620
 That leuer me were / keyes for to bere /
 Than walken in þis wilde woode my clothes to tere /
 Adam seyde Gamelyn dismaye þe right' nought'
 Many good mannes child in care is I-brought' 624
 And as þey stooode talkyng' bopen in feere /
 Adam herd talkyng' of' men and neyh him þought' þei were
 Tho Gamelyn vnder þe woode loked aright'
 vij. score of' 3onge men he saugh wel a dight' 628
 Alle satte atte mete compas aboute /
 Adam seyde Gamelyn now haue we no doute
 After bale comeþ boote þurgh grace of' god almight'
 Me þynkeþ of' mete and drynk' þat' I haue a sight 632

Adam lokede þo vnder woode bowȝ
 And whan he seyð mete he was glad ynough
 For he hopede to god for to haue his deel
 And he was sore alonged after a good meel 636
 As he seyde þat word þe mayster outlawe
 Saugh Gamelyn and adam vnder woode schawe /
 Ȝonge men seyde þe maister by þe goode roode
 I am war of gestes / god send vs non but goode 640
 Ȝonder ben tuo Ȝonge men wonder wel adight
 And paraenture þer ben mo / who-so loked aright
 Ariseþ vp ȝe Ȝonge men and fetteþ hem to me /
 It is good þat we witen what men þey bee / 644
 Vp þer sterten seuene / fro þe dyner
 And metten with Gamelyn and adam Spenser
 whan þey were neyh hem þan seyde þat oon [leaf 67, back]
 Ȝeldeth vp Ȝonge men ȝour bowes and ȝour floon . 648
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn þat yong^r was of elde
 Moche sorwe mot he haue þat to ȝou hem ȝelde /
 I curse non oþer but right my selue
 Þey ȝe fette to ȝow fyue þanne ȝe be twelue / 652
 Tho þey herde by his word þat might was in his arm
 Ther was non of hem alle / þat wolde do him harm .
 But sayd vnto gamelyn myldely and stille
 Com afore our maister and sey to him þy wille 656
 yonge men sayde Gamelyn by ȝour lewte
 what man is ȝour maister þat ȝe wiþ be
 Alle þey answerde wiþoute lesyng^r
 Oure maister is I-crowned of outlawes kyng^r 660
 Adam seyde Gamelyn gowe in cristes name /
 he may neyþer mete ne drynk^r werne vs for schame /
 If þat he be heende and come of gentil blood
 he wol ȝeue vs mete an drynk^r and doon vs som good 664
 By seynt Iame seyð adam / what harm þat I gete /
 I wil auntre to þe dore þat I hadde mete
 Gamelyn and adam wente forþ in feere
 And þey grette þe maister þat þey founde þere 668

Than seide þe maister kyng^t of^t outlawes
 what^t seeke 3e 3onge men vnder woode schawes
 Gamelyn answerde þe kyng^t wiþ his croune /
 he moste needes walke in woode þat^t may not walke in towne /
 Sire we walke not^t heer noon harm for to do 673
 But^t if^t we meete wiþ a deer to scheete þerto /
 As men þat^t ben hungry and mow no mete fynde
 And ben harde bystad vnder woode lynde 676
 Of Gamelynes wordes þe maister hadde roupe /
 And seyde 3e schal haue ynough haue god my troupe /
 he bad hem sitte þer adoun for to take reste / [1 ? MS. eite]
 And bad hem ¹ete and drynke and þat^t of^t þe beste / 680
 As þey sete and eeten and dronke wel and fyn ·
 Than seyð þat^t oon to þat^t oþer / þis is Gamelyn ·
 Tho was þe maister outlawe in to counseil nome
 And told how it was Gamelyn þat^t þider was I-come / 684
 Anon as he herde how it^t was bifalle [leaf 68]
 he made him maister vnder him ouer hem alle /
 wipin þe þridde wyke him com tydyng^t
 To þe maister outlawe þat^t þo was her kyng^t 688
 That^t he schulde come hom his pees was I-made
 And of^t þat^t goode tydyng^t he was þo ful glad
 Tho seyde he to his 3onge men soþ for to telle /
 Me ben comen tydynges I may no lenger dwelle / 692
 Tho was Gamelyn anon wiþoute taryyng^t
 Made maister outlawe and crowned her kyng^t
 ¶ Tho was Gamelyn crowned kyng^t of^t outlawes
 And walked a while vnder woode schawes 696
 The fals knight^t his broþer was scherreue and sire
 And leet^t his broþer endite for hate and for Ire /
 Tho were his bonde-men sory and noþing^t glade
 whan Gamelyn her lord wolues-heed was cryed & made 700
 And sente out^t of^t his men wher þey might^t him fynde
 For to seke Gamelyn vnder woode lynde /
 To telle him tydynges how þe wynd was went^t
 And al his good reued and his men schent 704

¶ whan þey had him founde on knees þey hem sette /
 And a-doun wiþ here hood and here lord grette /
 Sire wrappe þou nought for þe goode roode /
 For we haue brought þou tydynges but þey be nat goode 708
 Now is þy broþer scherreue and haþ þe baillye
 And he haþ endited þe and wolues-heed doþ þe *crie*
 ¶ Allas seyde Gamelyn þat euer I was so slak
 þat I ne hadde broke his nekke þo his Rigge brak 712
 Goþ greteþ hem wel myn housbondes and wyf
 I wol ben atte nexte schire haue god my lyf
 Gamelyn came wel redy to þe nexte schire/
 And þer was his broþer boþe lord and sire / 716
 Gamelyn com boldelych in to þe moot halle
 And put a doun his hood among þe lordes alle
 God saue þou alle lordynges þat now here be
 But Brokebak Scherreue euel mot þou þe / 720
 why hast þou do me þat schame and vilonye /
 For to late endite me and woluesheed me crye
 Tho þought þe fals knight for to ben awreke [leaf 68, back]
 And leet take Gamelyn most he nomore speke 724
 Might þer be nomore grace but Gamelyn atte last
 was cast in to prisoun and fetered ful fast
 Gamelyn haþ a broþer þat highte sir Ote
 As good a knight and heende as mighte gon on foote 728
 Anon þer ȝede a messenger to þat goode knight
 And told him altogidere how Gamelyn was dight
 Anon as sire Ote herde how Gamelyn was a dight
 he was wonder sory was he no þing light 732
 And leet sadle a steede and þe way he nam
 And to his tweyne breþeren anon right he cam
 Sire seyde sire Ote to þe scherreue þo /
 we ben but thre breþeren schul we neuer be mo 736
 And þou hast y-prisoned þe best of vs alle /
 Swich anoþer broþer yuel mot him bifalle
 Sire Ote seide þe-fals knight lat be þi curs /
 By god for þy wordes he schal fare þe wurs 740

To þe kynges prisoun anon he is y-nome
 And þer he schal abyde til þe Iustice come /
 Par de seyde sir Ote better it schal be
 I bidde him to maympris þat þou graunt him me 744
 Til þe nexte sitting of delyueraunce
 And þanne lat Gamelyn stande to his chaunce
 Broþer in swich a forthward I take him to the /
 And by þi fader soule þat þe bygat and me 748
 But if he be redy whan þe Iustice sitte /
 Thou schalt bere þe Iuggement for al þi grete witte
 I graunte wel seide sir Ote þat it so be
 Let delyuer him anon and tak him to me / 752
 Tho was Gamelyn delyuered to sire Ote his broþer
 And þat night dwelleden þat on wip þat oper
 On þe morn seyde Gamelyn to sir Ote þe heende
 Broþer he seide I moot / forsothe fro þe wende 756
 To loke how my 3onge men leden here lyf
 whether þey lyuen in Ioie or elles in stryf
 By god seyde sire Ote / þat is a cold reed
 Now I see þat al þe cark schall fallen on myn heed 760
 For whan þe Iustice sitte and þou be nought I-founde
 I schal anon be take and in þy stede I-bounde / [leaf 69]
 Broþer sayde Gamelyn dismaye þe nought
 For by seint Iame in gales þat many man hap sought 764
 If þat god almighty hold my lyf and witt
 I wil be þer redy whan þe Iustice sitt
 Than seide sir Ote to Gamelyn god schilde þe fro schame
 Com whan þou seest tyme / and bring vs out of blame / 768
L Itheþ and lestneþ and holdeþ 3ou stille /
 And 3e schul here how Gamelyn had al his wille /
 Gamelyn wente a3ein vnder woode Rys
 And fond þere pleyng 3onge men of prys 772
 Tho was 3onge Gamelyn glad & bliþe ynough
 whan he fond his mery men vnder woode bough
 Gamelyn and his men talked in feere /
 And þey hadde good game here maister to heere 776

They tolden him of auentures þat þey hadde founde /
 And Gamelyn hem tolde aȝein how he was fast I-bounde
 whil Gamelyn was outlawed had he no cors
 There was no man þat for him ferde þe wors 780
 But abbotes and priours monk and Chanoun
 On hem left he no þing whan he might hem nom
 whil Gamelyn and his men made merþes ryue
 The fals knight his broþer yuel mot he þryue / 784
 For he was fast about boþe day and oþer
 For to hyre þe quest to hangen his broþer
 Gamelyn stood on a day and as he biheeld
 The woodes and þe schawes in þe wilde feeld 788
 he þought on his broþer how he him beheet
 That he wolde be redy whan þe Iustice seet
 he þoughte wel þat he wolde wipoute delay
 Come afore þe Iustice to kepen his day 792
 And seide to his ȝonge men dighteþ ȝou ȝare /
 For whan þe Iustice sitt we moote be þare /
 For I am vnder borwe til þat I come /
 And my broþer for me to prisoun schal be nome / 796
 By seint Iame seyde his ȝonge men and þou rede þerto
 Ordeyne how it schal be and it schal be do /
 whil Gamelyn was comyng þer þe Iustice sat/
 The fals knight his broþer forȝat he nat þat [leaf 69, back] 800
 To huyre þe men on his quest to hangen his broþer
 Though he hadde nought þat oon he wolde haue þat oþer
 Tho cam Gamelyn fro vnder woode Rys
 And broughte wip him / his ȝonge men of prys 804
 ¶ I se wel seyde Gamelyn þe Iustice is sette
 Go aforȝn adam and loke how it spette /
 Adam went in to þe halle and loked al aboute
 he seyh þere stonde lordes gret and stoute / 808
 And sir Ote his broþer fetered wel fast
 þo went adam out of halle as he were agast
 Adam said to Gamelyn and to his felaws alle
 Sir Ote stant I-fetered in þe moot halle 812

3onge men seide Gamelyn þis 3e heeren alle
 Sir Ote stant I-fetered in þe moot halle
 If God 3if vs grace wel for to doo
 he schal it abegge þat broughte þerto 816
 Thanne sayde adam þat lokkes hadde hore /
 Cristes curs most he haue þat him bond so sore
 And þou wilt Gamelyn do after my red
 Ther is noon in þe halle schal bere a-wey his heed 820
 Adam seyde Gamelyn we wilne nought don so /
 we wil slee þe giltyf and lat þe oþer go
 I wil in to þe halle /and wiþ þe Iustice speke /
 On hem þat ben gultyf I wil ben a-wreke 824
 lat non skape at þe dore take 3onge men 3eme /
 For I wil be Iustice þis day domes to deme
 God spede me þis day at my newe werk
 Adam com on *with me* / for þou schalt be my clerk 828
 His men answereden him and bad him doon his best
 And if þou to vs haue neede þou schalt fynde vs prest
 we wiln stande with þe whil þat we may dure
 And but we werke manly pay vs non hure / 832
 yonge men seyde Gamelyn so mot I wel þe
 As trusty a maister 3e schal fynde of me /
 Right þere þe justice sat in þe halle
 In wente Gamelyn amonges hem alle 836
 ¶ Gamelyn leet / vnfetere his broþer out of beende
 Thanne seyde sir Ote his broþer þat was heende [leaf 70]
 Thou haddest almost Gamelyn dwelled to longe
 For þe quest is oute on me þat I schulde honge 840
 Broþer seyde Gamelyn so god 3if me good rest
 This day þey schuln ben hanged þat ben on þy quest
 And þe Iustice boþe þat is Iugges man
 And þe scherreue boþe þurgh him it bigan 844
 Than seyde Gamelyn to þe Iustise
 Now is þy power y-don þou most nedes arise
 Thow hast 3euene domes þat ben yuel dight
 I wil sitten in þy sete an dresen hem aright 848

The Iustice sat stille and roos nought anoon
 And Gamelyn cleuede his cheeke boon
 Gamelyn took him in his arm and no more spak
 But þrew him ouer þe barre and his arm tobrak 852
 Durste non to Gamelyn seye but good
 For fered of þe company þat wiþoute stood
 Gamelyn sette him down in þe Iustices sete /
 And sire Ote his broþer by him / and adam at his feet 856
 whan Gamelyn was I-set in þe Iustices sete
 herkneþ of a bourde þat Gamelyn dede /
 he leet fetre þe Iustice and his fals broþer
 And dede hem come to þe barre þat oon wiþ þat oþer 860
 Tho Gamelyn hadde þus y-doon had he no rest
 Til he had enquired who was on þe quest
 For to deme his broþer sir Ote for to honge /
 Er he wiste which þey were he þoughte ful longe 864
 But as sone as Gamelyn wiste wher þey were
 he dede hem euerichone fetere in feere /
 And bringen hem to þe barre and sette hem in rewe /
 By my faip seyde þe Iustice þe Scherreue is a schrewe 868
 Than seyde Gamelyn to þe Iustise
 Thou hast y-geue domes of þe wors assise
 And þe .xij. sisours þat weren of þe queste /
 They schul ben hanged þis day so haue I reste 872
 Thanne seide þe scherreu to zonge Gamelyn ·
 Lord I crie þe mercy broþer art þou myn
 Therfore seyde Gamely haue þou cristes curs
 For and þou were maister 3it I schulde haue wors [1770, bk] 876
 For to make schort tale and nouzt to tarie longe
 he ordeyned him a queste of his men so stronge
 The Iustice and þe scherreu boþe honged hye
 To weyuen wiþ ropes and wiþ þe wynd drye 880
 And þe .xij. sisours sorwe haue þat rekke
 Alle þey were hanged faste by þe nekke /
 Thus ended þe fals knight wiþ his treccherie
 That euer had I-lad his lyf in falsnes and folye 884

He was hanged by þe nek^t and nouȝt^t by þe purs
 That^t was þe meede þat^t he had for his fadres curs
 Sir Ote was eldest^t and Gamelyn was ȝing^t
 þey wenten wiþ here freendes euen to þe kyng^t 888
 They made pees wiþ þe kyng^t of^t þe best^t assise
 The kyng^t loued wel sir Ote and made him Iustise
 And after þe kyng^t made Gamelyn boþe in Est^t and west
 Chef^t Iustice of^t al his fre forest^t 892
 Alle his wighte ȝonge men þe kyng^t forȝaf^t here gilt^t
 And sitthen in good office þe kyng^t hem hath I-pilt^t
 Thus wan Gamelyn his lond and his leede 895
 And wrak^t him of^t his enemys and quyt^t hem here meede
 And sire Ote his broþer made him his heir
 And siþþen wedded Gamelyn a wyf^t boþe good and feyr
 They lyueden to-gidere / whil þat crist^t wolde
 And siþþen was Gamelyn grauen vnder molde 900
 And so schal we alle may þer no man fle
 God bryng^t vs to þe Ioye þat^t euer schal be / A M E N

[*The rest of the page, eleven lines, is blank in the MS.*]

GROUP B. (FRAGMENT II.)

§ 1. MAN OF LAW'S HEAD-LINK.

HARLEIAN MS. 7334 (British Museum).

Owre Hoste sawh þat þe bryghte sonne [leaf 71]
 The arke of his artificial day hap I-ronne
 The fourþe part of half an hour and more /
 And þough he were nat depe in lore 4
 he wist it was þe prettenþe day
 Of april þat is messenger to may
 And sawe wel þat þe schade of euery tree
 was in þe lengthe þe same quantite 8
 That was þe body erecte þat caused it
 And þerfore by þe schadwe he took his wit
 That Phebus which þat schoon so fair and bryght
 Degrees was .xlv. clombe on hight 12
 And for þat day as in þat latitude
 Hit was ten of þe klokke he gan conclude /
 And sodeynly he plight his hors aboute
LOrdynge quod he I warne þou al þe route 16
 The fourþe party of þis day is goon
 Now for þe loue of god and of seint Ion
 leseþ no tyme as forþe as þe may
 lordynge þe tyme passeþ night and day 20
 And stelþ fro vs what pryuely slepyng
 And what þurgh necligence in oure wakyng
 As doþ þe stream þat torneþ neuer agayn
 Descendyng fro þe mounteyn in to playn 24
 wel can senek and many philosopher
 Bywaylen tyme more þan gold in cofre
 For losse of catel may recouered be /
 But losse of tyme schendeth vs quod he 28

It wil nat^t come agayn wipoute drede
 Nomore þan wol malkyns maydenhede
 whan sche had lost^t it in hir wantownesse /
 let^t vs nat^t mowlen þus in ydelnesse 32

SIr man of^t lawe *quod* he so haue 3e blisse
 Telle vs a tale anon as forward ys
 3e be submitted þurgh^h our fre assent/
 To stonden in þis cas at^t my Iuggement 36
 Acquyteþ 3ow and holdeþ 3oure byheste /
 Than haue 3e doon 3our deuour atte leste

HOst^t *quod* he *depardeux* I assent^t [*leaf 71, back*]
 To breke forward is nat^t myn entent/ 40

Byheste is dette and I wol holde fayn
 Al my byhest^t I can no better sayn
 For such lawe as a man 3eueth anoper wight^t
 he schuld him selue vsen hit^t by right^t 44

Thus wol oure text^t but napeles certeyn
 I can right^t now non oper tale seyn
 That^t Chaucer þey he can but^t lewedly
 On metres and on Rymyng^t certeynly 48

Hap^t seyð hem in such englisch as he can
 Of olde tyme as knoweþ many man
 And 3if^t he haue nou3t^t sayð hem leue brother
 In O bok^t he hap^t seyð hem in anoper 52

For he hap^t told of^t louers vp and down
 Moo þan Ovide made of^t mencion
 In his Epistles þat^t ben so olde
 what^t schuld I tellen hem syn þey be tolde / 56

In 3oupe he made of^t Coys and alcioun
 And sippe hap^t he spoke of^t euerychon
 These noble wyfes and þese louers eeke
 who-so wole his large volume seeke 60

Cleped þe seintes legendes of^t Cupide
 Ther may he see þe large woundes wyde
 Of^t lucresse and of^t Babiloun Tysbee
 Thē sorwe of^t Dido for þe fals Enee 64

The tree of philles for hir demephon
 The pleynt of Dyane and of Ermyon
 Of Adrian and of ysphilee
 The barren yle stondyng in þe see / 68
 The dreynt leander for hir Erro
 The teeres of Eleyne and eek þe woo
 Of bryxseyde and of ledomia
 The cruelte of þe queen Medea 72
 The litel children hangyng by þe hals
 For þilke Iason þat was of loue so fals
 O ypermystre penollope and alceste /
 3oure wyfhood he comendeth wiþ þe beste 76
 But certeynly no worde writeþ he
 Of þilke wikked ensample of Canace
 That loued hir owen broþer synfully
 On whiche corsed stories I seye fy 80
 Or elles of Tyro appoloneus
 how þat þe cursed kyng Antechus
 Byreft his doughter of hir maydenhede
 That is so horrible a tale as man may reede 84
 whan he hir þrew vpon þe pament
 And þefore he of ful auysement
 wolde neuer wryte in non of his sermons
 Of such vnkynde abhominaciouns 88
 Ne I wol non reherse if þat I may
 But of my tale how schal I do þis day
 Me were loth to be lykned douteles /
 To muses þat men clepen Pyerides 92
 Methamorphoseos wot what I mene
 But napeles I recche nat a bene
 They I come after him with hawe-bake /
 I speke in prose¹ and let him rymes make 96
 And wiþ þat word he wiþ a sobre cheere
 Bygan his tale as 3e schal after heere ¶ Explicit prologus

[No break in the MS.]

¹ Was *Melibe* first meant for the Man of Law?

[*The Proem*]

incipit fabula /

O Hateful harm condicioñ of pouert' [on leaf 72] 99
 wiþ þurst wiþ cold wiþ hunger so confoundyd
 To asken help it schameþ in þin hert
 If þou non aske wiþ neede so art þou woundyd
 That verry neede vnwrappeþ al þy woundes hyd

Maugre þyn heed þou most for Indigence
 Or stele or begge or borwe þy dispenche 105

Thow blamest crist and seyst ful bitterly 106

he mys departeþ riches temporal

And þyn neyhebour þou wytes synfully

And seyst þou hast to litel and he haþ al 109

Parfay seystow som tyme he rekne schal

whan þat his tayl schal brennen in þe gleede

For he nought helpeþ þe needful in his neede 112

HErkneþ what is þe sentens of þe wyse 113

Bet is to dye þan haue indigence

Thy selue neyghbour wol þe despyse [leaf 72, back]

If þou be pore far wel þy reuerence 116

3et of þe wyse man tak þis sentence

Alle þe dayes of pore men be wikke /

Be war þerfore or þou come to þat prikke / 119

3if þou be pore þy broþer hateþ þe 120

And alle þy frendes fleep fro þe allas

O Riche marchaund3 ful of wele be 3e

O noble prudent folk as in þis cas 123

3oure bagges beþ nat fuld wiþ ambes aas

But wiþ sys synk þat renneþ on 3our chaunce

At crystemasse wel mery may 3e daunce 126

3 e seeke land and see for 3our wynnynge	127
As wyse folk ^t as 3e knowe alle þastates	
Of regnes / 3e be fadres of ^t tydynge	
Of ^t tales boþe of ^t pees and of ^t debates /	130
I were right ^t now of ^t tales desolat	
Nere þat ^t a marchaunt ^t gon sipþen many a 3ere /	
Me taught ^t a tale which 3e schal after heere	133

[*The Tale*]

- I**N Surrie dwelled whilom a companye [on ff 72, bk] 134
 Of Chapmen riche and þerto sad and trewe
 That wyde where sent her spycere
 Clopes of gold and satyn rich of hewe / 137
 her chaffar was so þrifty and so newe
 That euery wight had deynte to chaffare
 wiþ hem and eek to selle hem of here ware / 140
- Now fel it þat þe maystres of þat sort 141
 han schapen hem to Rome for to wende
 were it for chapmanhode or for disport
 Non oþer message nolde þey þider sende / 144
 But came hemself to Rome þis is þe ende
 And in such place /as þought hem auanntage
 For here entent þey tooke her herburgage 147
- Soiourned naue þese marchaunt3 in þe toun 148
 A certeyn tyme as fel to here plesaunce
 But so bifell þat þe excellent renoun
 Of þemperoures doughter dame Custaunce 151
 Reported was with euery circumstaunce
 vnto þese surrien3 marchaunt3 in such wyse [leaf 73]
 Fro day to day as I schal 3ou deuyse / 154
- This was þe comyn voys of euery man 155
 Oure emperour of Rome god him see
 A doughter haþ þat siþ þe world bygan
 To Rekne as wel hir goodnes as hir bewte / 158
 Nas neuer such anoþer as was sche
 I prey to god hir saue and susteene
 And wolde sche were of al Europe þe queene 161

In hire is hye bewte wipoute pryde 162
 3owþe wipoute greſhed or folye
 To alle here werkes vertu is hire gyde /
 humblesse haþ slayne in hir tyrrannye / 165
 Sche is myroure of alle curtesye /
 hir herte is verrey chambre of holynesse
 hir hond mynistre of fredom and almesse 168

And al þis voys is soþ as god is trewe 169
 But now to purpos let vs turne aȝein
 These marchantȝ haue don fraught here schippes newe /
 And whan þey haue þis blisful mayde seyn · 172
 Home to Surrey be þey went aȝein /
 And doon here needes as þey haue don ȝore
 And lyuen in wele I can ȝou say no more / 175

Now fel it þat þese marchauntȝ stoden in grace / 176
 Of him þat was þe Sowdan of Surrye
 For whan þey come fro eny straunge place /
 he wolde of his benigne curtesye 179
 Make hem good chere and busily aspye
 Tydynges of sondry regnes for to lere/
 The wordes þat þey mighte seen and heere / 182

Among oþer þinges specially 183
 These marchauntȝ him told of dame Constaunce
 So gret noblesse in earnest so ryally
 That þis Sowdan haþ caught so gret plesaunce 186
 To haue hir figure in his remembraunce
 And al his lust and al his besy cure
 was for to loue hir whiles his lyf may dure 189

Par auenture in pilke large booke / 190
 which þat is cleped þe heuen I-write was [leaf 73, back]
 wip sterres whan þat he his burþe took
 That he for loue schulde haue his deþ allas / 193

For in þe sterres clerere þen is glas /
 Is wryten god woot who-so cowþe it rede
 The dep of euery man wipouten drede 196

IN sterres many a wynter þer byfore 197
 was write þe dep of Ector and Achilles /
 Of Pompe Iulius er þey were I-bore /
 The stryf of Thebes and of Ercules / 200
 Of Sampson Turnus and of Socrates
 The dep but mennes wittes ben so dulle /
 That no wight can wel rede it at þe fulle 203

This sowdan for his pryue counseil sent 204
 And schortly of þis mater for to pace /
 he hap to hem declared his entent
 And seyð hem certeyn but he might haue grace / 207
 To haue Constance wipinne a litel space
 he nas but deed and charged hem in hyȝe
 To schapen for his lyf som remedye 210

Dyuerse men dyuers þinges seyde 211
 The argumentes casten vp and doun
 Many a subtyl resoun forþ þey leyden
 They spekyn of magike and of ambusioun 214
 But finally as in conclusioun
 They can nought seen in þat non auauntage
 Ne in non oþer wey saue in mariage 217

Than sawgh þey þer in such difficulte 218
 By wey of resoun to speke it al playn ·
 By cause þat þer was such dyuersite /
 Bitwen here boþe lawes as þey sayn 221
 They trowe þat no cristen prynces wold fayn
 wedden his child vnder our lawe swete /
 That vs was taught by mahoun oure prophete / 224

And he answerde raper þan I lese 225
 Constance I wol be cristen douteles /
 I moot be heres I may non oþer cheese /
 I pray 3ou haldeth 3our arguments in pees / 228
 Saueþ my lyf and beþ nat recheles / [leaf 74]
 God geteþ hire þat haþ my lyf in cure /
 For in þis wo I may no lenger dure / 231

What needeþ gretter dilatacioun 232
 I say by tretys and ambassatrye
 And by þe popes mediacioun
 And al þe chirche and al þe chyualrye / 235
 That in destruccioun of mawmetrye
 And in encesse of cristes lawe deere /
 They ben acordid as 3e schal after heere / 238

How þat þe Soudan and his baronage 239
 And alle his lieges schuld I-crystned be /
 And he schal haue Constance in mariage/
 And certeyn gold I not what quantite 242
 And þefore founden þey suffisant seurte
 This same acord was sworn on euery syde/
 Now fair Constance almighty god þe guyde / 245

Now wolde som men wayten as I gesse 246
 That I schulde tellen al þe puryaunce /
 That þemperour of his gret noblesse /
 Haþ schapen for his doughter dame Constance / 249
 wel may men knowe þat so gret ordynaunce
 May no man telle in so litel a clause /
 As was arrayed for so high a cause / 252

Bisschops ben schapen with hir for to wende 253
 lordes ladyes and knightes of renoun
 And oþer folk ynowe þis þis is þe ende
 And notefied is þurgh out þe toun 256

That euery wight wiþ gret deuocioun
 Schulde preye crist þat he þis mariage
 Receyue in gree and spede þis viage 259

The day is come of hire departyng 260
 I say þe woful day þat þan is come
 That þer may be no lenger tarryyng
 But forþeward þey dresse hem alle & some / 263
 Constance þat with sorwe is ouercome
 Ful pale arist and dresseþ hir to wende /
 For wel sche saugh þer nas non oþer ende 266

Allas what wonder is it/ þough sche wepte [*leaf 74, back*] 267
 That schal be sent to straunge nacioun
 Fro freendes þat so tenderly hir kepte /
 And to be bounde vndur subieccioun 270
 Of oon sche knew nat his condicioun
 Housbondes ben al goode and han be 3ore
 That knowen wyfes I dar say no more / 273

Fader scene seid þy wrecched child Costaunce 274
 Thy 3onge doughter fostred vp so softe /
 And 3e my mooder my souerayn plesaunce
 Ouer al þing outaken crist on lofte / 277
 Constaunce 3our child hir recomaundeth ofte
 Vnto 3our grace / for I schal in to Surrye
 Ne schal I neuer see 3ou more wiþ ye 280

Allas vnto þe barbre nacioun 281
 I most anoon / seþens it is 3our wille
 But crist þat starf for our redempcioun
 So 3eue me grace his hestes to fulfille / 284
 I wrecched womman no fors þey I spille /
 wommen ben born to þraldam and penaunce
 And to ben vnder mannes gouernaunce 287

I trowe at Troye whan Pirrus brak þe wal 288
 Or yleon þat brend Thebes þe Citee
 Ne at Rome for þe harme þurgh hanibal
 That Romayns han venquysshed tymes þre 291
 Nas herd such tender wepyng for pite
 As in þe Chambur was for hir partyng
 But forþ sche moot wheþer sche weep or syng 294

O firste meuyng cruel firmament 295
 with þi diurnal swough þat crowdest ay
 And hurlest al fro Est to Occident
 That naturelly wold hold anoþer way 298
 Thyn crowdyng sette þe heuen in such array
 At þe bygyng of þis fiers viage
 That cruel marc3 hap slayn þis marriage 301

Infortunat ascendent tortuous 302
 Of which þe lordes helples falle alas
 Out of his angle in to þe derkest hous
 O. Mari3 attegere as in þis caas [leaf 75] 305
 O feble moone vnhappy been þi paas /
 Thou knettest þe þer þou art nat receyued
 Ther þou were wel fro þennes artow weyued 308

Inprudent Emperour of Rome alas 309
 was þer no philosopher in al þy toun
 Is no tyme bet þan oþer in such caas
 Of viage is þer noon eleccioun 312
 Namly to folk of heigh condicioun
 Nought whan a roote is of a birthe I-knowe
 Allas we ben to lewed and eek to slowe / 315

[To Shipe] is brought þis woful faire mayde / [In a later
 Solempnely with euery circumstance / hand.]
 Now Ihū crist so be wiþ þou sche sayde /
 Ther ныs nomor but far wel fair Custaunce 319

She peyneth hire to make good contienauunce
 And forþ I lete hire sayle in þis manere /
 And torne I wol aȝein to my matiere / 322

The moder of þe Sawdan ful of vices 323
 Aspyed haþ hir sonas playn entent/
 how he wol lete his olde sacrifices
 And right anoon sche for hir counseil sent' 326
 And þey ben come to knowe what' sche ment
 And whan assembled was þis folk' in fere
 Sche sette hir doun and sayd as ȝe schal heere / 329

Lordes quod sche ȝe knowen euerichon 330
 how þat' my sone in poynt' is for to lete
 The holy lawes of our alkaron
 ȝe ben goddes messangere makamete / 333
 But' oon avow to grete god I hete
 The lyf' schuld rap' out' of my body stert'
 Or makametes law go out' of myn hert' 336

What schal vs tyden of þis newe lawe 337
 But' þraldam to oure body and penaunce
 And afterward in helle to be drawe /
 For we reneyed mahound oure creaunce 340
 But' lordes wol ȝe maken assuraunce
 As I schal say assentyng' to my lore
 And I schal make vs sauf' for euermore [leaf 75, back] 343

They sworn and assenten euery man 344
 To lyf' wiþ hir and dye and by hir stonde
 And euerich in þe beste wise he can
 To strengþen hir schal al his frendes fonde 347
 And sche haþ Emperise take on honde
 which ȝe schul heere þat' I schal deuyse /
 And to hem alle sche spak' in þis wyse / 350

We schul first^t feyne ous cristendom to take 351
 Cold watir schal nat^t greue vs but a lite /
 And I schal such a fest^t and Reuel make /
 That^t as I trow I schal þe Sowdan quyte 354
 For þough his wyf^t be cristned neuer so white
 Sche schal haue need to waissche away þe rede
 They sche a font of^t watir wiþ hir lede 357

O Sowdones root^t of^t iniquite 358
 Virago þou Semyram þe secounde
 O serpent^t vnder feminite
 Lyk^t to þe serpent^t deep in helle I-bounde 361
 O feyned womman alle þat^t may confounde
 Vertu and Innocence þurgh þy malice /
 Is bred in þe as nest^t of^t euery vice 364

O Satan enuyous syn pilke day 365
 That^t þou were chased fro oure heritage
 wel knewest^t þou to wommen þe olde way
 Thou madest^t Eue to bryng^t vs in seruage 368
 Thou wolt^t fordoon þis cristen mariage
 Thyn instrument so weylaway þe while
 Makestow of^t wommen whan þou wolt^t bygile 371

This Sawdones whom I þus blame and wary 372
 let pryuely hir counseil gon his way
 what^t schuld I in þis tale lenger tary
 Sche rideþ to þe Soudan on a day 375
 And seyð him þat sche wold reney hir lay
 And cristendam of^t prestes handes fonge
 Repentyng^t hir sche hethen was so longe 378

Bysechyng^t him to doon hir þat^t honour 379
 That^t sche most^t haue þe cristen men to feste /
 To plesen hem I wil do my labour [leaf 76]
 The sawdan seith I wol do at^t þour heste 382

And knelyng^t þankeþ hir of^t þat^t requeste
 So glad he was he nyst nat what^t to seye
 Sche kyst^t hir sone and hom sche goþ hir weye 385

[PART II.]

Arryued ben þe cristen folk^t to londe / 386
 In Surry with a gret^t solempne route
 And hastily þis soudan sent^t his sonde
 First^t to his moder and al þe regne aboute 389
 And seyð his wyf^t was comen out^t of^t doute
 And preyed hir for to ride aȝein þe queene
 The honour of^t his regne to susteene / 392

Gret^t was þe prees and riche was tharray 393
 Of Surriens and Romayns mette in feere
 The moodur of^t þe Sowdan riche and gay
 Receyued hir with al so glad a cheere 396
 As eny modir might^t hir doughter deere
 And to þe nexte Citee þer bysyde
 A softe paas solempnely þay ryde 399

Nough^t trow I þe triumphe of^t Iulius 400
 Of^t which þat lukan makeþ moche best^t
 was ryaller ne more curious
 Than was thasseuble of^t þis blisful oost^t 403
 But^t þis Scorioun þis wikked goost^t
 This Sowdone for al hir flateryng^t
 Cast^t vnder þis ful mortally to styng^t 406

The Sawdan comp^t himself^t sone after þis 407
 So really þat^t wonder is to telle
 And welcomeþ hir wiþ ioy and blys
 And þus with myrth and ioy I let hem dwelle 410

The fruyt of þis matier is þat I telle
 whan tyme com men þought it for þe best
 That reuel stynt and men goon to her rest 413

The tyme com þe olde Sowdonesse 414
 Ordeyned haþ þis fest of which I told
 And to þe feste cristen folk hem dresse
 [. *no gap in the MS.*] 417
 Ther men may fest and realte byholde
 And deyntes mo / þan I can of deuyse
 But al to deere þey bought it ar þey ryse [*leaf 76, back*] 420

O sodeyn wo þat euer art successour 421
 ¶ To worldly blis spreynð is wiþ bitternesse /
 The ende of oure ioye of oure worldly labour
 wo occupieth þe fyn of oure gladnesse 424
 herken þis counseil for thyn sikernesse
 vpon þyn glade dayes haue in þi mynde
 The vnwar woo þat cometh ay bihynde 427

For schortly for to tellen at o word 428
 The Sawdan and þe cristen euerichone
 Ben al to-hewe and stiked atte bord
 But it were Dame Constaunce allone 431
 This olde Sowdones þis cursed crone
 haþ wiþ hir frendes doon þis cursed dede
 For sche hir self wold al þe contre lede 434

Ne þer was surrien noon / þat was conuerted 435
 That of þe counseil of þe Sawdon woot
 That he nas alto-hewe or he asterted
 And Constaunce haue þey take anon foot-hoot 438
 And in a schippe / steleres god it woot
 They haue hir set. and bad hir lerne to sayle
 Out of Surry aȝeinward to ytaile 441

- A** certain tresour þat sche þider ladde 442
 And soþ to sayn vitaile gret plente
 They haue hir ȝeuen and cloþes eek sche hadde
 And forþ sche sayleþ to þe salte see 445
 O my Constaunce ful of benignite
 O Emperoures ȝonge doughter deere
 he þat is Lord of fortun be þi steere 448
- Sche blesseþ hir and with ful pitous voys 449
 Vnto þe croys of crist þan seyde sche
 O cler o welful auter holy croys
 Rood of þe lambes blood ful of pite 452
 That wissh þe world fro old iniquite
 Me fro þe feend and fro his clowes keepe
 That day þat I schal drenchen in þe deepe 455
- Victorious tre proteccioun of trewe 456
 That oonly were worthy for to bere
 That kyng of heuen with his woundes newe [leaf 77]
 The white lamb þat hurt was with a spere 459
 Flemer of feendes out of him and here /
 On which þy lymes feithfully extenden
 Me kepe and ȝif me might my lyf to menden 462
- Ȝeres and dayes flette þis creature 463
 Thurghout þe see of Grece in to þe strayte
 Of Marrok as it was hir aduenture /
 O many a sory mele may sche bayte 466
 After hir deth ful / ofte may sche wayte
 Or þat þe wilde wawe wol hir dryue
 Vnto þe place þer as sche schal arryue 469
- Men mighten aske why sche was nouȝt slayn 470
 Ek at þe fest. who might hir body saue
 And I answered that demaunde agayn
 who saued Daniel / in thorrible Caue 473

That euery wight sauf he mayster or knaue
 was wiþ þe lioun frete or he asterte
 No wight but god þat he bar in his herte 476

God lust to schewe his wondurful miracle 477
 In hir for sche schuld seen his mighty werkes
 Crist which þat is to euery harm triacle
 By certeyn menes ofte as knowen clerkes 480
 Doth þing for certeyn ende þat ful derk is //
 To mannes witt / þat for our ignoraunce
 Ne can nought knowe his prudent puruyaunce 483

Now sith sche was nat at þe fest I-slawe / 484
 who kepte hir fro drenching in þe see /
 who kepte Ionas in þe fisches mawe
 Til he was spouted vp at Niniue 487
 wel may men knowe it was no wight but he
 That kept þe pepul Ebrayk fro her drenchyng
 wiþ drye feet / þurhout þe see passyng 490

Who hadde foure spiritz of tempest 491
 That power han to noyen land and see
 Boþe norþ and souþ and also west and Est
 Anoyeþ neyþer londe / see ne tree / 494
 Soply þe comaunder of þat was he
 That fro þe tempest ay þis womman kepte [leaf 77, back]
 As wel when sche awok as when sche slepte 497

Wher might þis womman mete and drinke haue / 498
 Thre 3er and more / how lasteþ hir vitaille
 who fedde þe Egipcien marie in þe Caue
 Or in desert no wight but crist saunþ faile 501
 Fyf þousand folk / it was a gret meruaile/
 wiþ loues fyf and fissesches tuo to feede
 God sent his foyssoun at her grete neede 504

- Sche dryueþ forþ in to oure Occean 505
 Thurghout oure wilde see til atte last
 vnder an holte þat men nempne can
 Fer in Northumberland þe wawe hir cast 508
 And in þe sand þe schip styked so fast
 That þennes wold it nouȝt in al a tyde
 The wille of crist was þat sche schold abyde 511
- The Constabil of / þe castel down is fare / 512
 To se þis wrak / and al þe schip he souȝt
 And fond þis wery womman ful of care
 And fand also þe tresour þat sche brought 515
 In hir langage mercy sche bisouȝt
 The lif out of her body for to wynne
 hir to delyuer of woo þat sche was Inne / 518
- A maner latyn corrupt was hir speche 519
 But algates / þer by sche was vnderstonde
 The constabil whan him lust no lenger seche
 This woful womman broughte he to londe / 522
 Sche kneleþ doun and thanketh goddes sonde
 But what sche was sche wolde no man seye
 For foul ne faire / þough sche scholde deye 525
- Sche was sche seyð so mased in þe see 526
 That sche forgat hir mynde by hire trowþe /
 The constable had of hir so gret pitee
 And eek his wyf þey wepeden for routhe 529
 Sche was so diligent wiþouten slouþe /
 To serue and plese euer in þat place
 That alle hir louen þat loken on hir face 532
- The Constable and dame hermegyld his wyf 533
 To telle ȝou playne in peynes boþe were [leaf 78]
 But hermegyld loued constance as hir lyf
 And Constance hap so long herberwed þere 536

In orisoun wiþ many a bitter teere /
 Til ihū hap conuerted þurgh his *grace*
 Dame hermegyld þe Constables wif of þe place 539

In al þe lond no cristen men durst route 540
 Al cristen men ben fled from þat contre
 Thurgh payens þat conquered al a-boute /
 The places of þe north by land and see 543
 To wales fled þe cristianite
 Of olde britouns dwellyng in þis yle /
 Ther was hir refut for þe mene while 546

But/ ȝit nere cristen britouns so exiled 547
 That þer / nere some in here pryuite /
 honoured crist and heþen men bygiled
 And neigh þe Castel such þer dwellid þre 550
 That oon of hem was blynd and might nat se /
 But if it were wiþ eyen of his mynde
 wiþ which men seen after þat þey ben blynde 553

Bright was þe sonne as in someres day 554
 For which þe constable and his wif also
 And Constaunce had take þe righte way
 Toward þe see a forlong wey or two 557
 To pleyen and to Romen to and fro
 And in þat/ walk the blynde men þey mette
 Croked and olde with eyen fast y-schette 560

In name of crist / cryed þis old britoun 561
 Dame hermegyld ȝif me my sight aȝeyn
 This lady wax affrayed of þe soun
 lest þat hir houseband schortly to sayn 564
 wold hir for ihū cristes loue haue slayn
 Til Constaunce made hir bold and bad hir werche
 The wil of crist as douȝter of holy chirche 567

The Constable wax abaiſshed of þat sight 568
 And sayde what amounteþ al þis fare
 Conſtaunce answered / ſir it is criſtes might
 That helpeth folk out of þe feendes ſnare / 571
 And ſo ferforþ ſche gan hir lay declare/ [leaf 78, back]
 That ſche þe Constable er þat it was Eue
 Conuerted and on criſt made him bileue 574

This Constable was no þing lord of þe place 575
 Of which I ſpeke þer he Conſtance fond
 But kept it ſtrongly many a wynter ſpace
 vnder alla kyng of Northumberlond 578
 That was ful wys and worþy of his hond
 Aȝein þe ſcottes as men may wel heere
 But tourne aȝein I wil to my mateere 581

Satan þat euer vs wayteþ to begile / 582
 Sawe of Conſtaunce þe perſecucioun
 And caſt anon how he might quyt hir while /
 And made a ȝong knight þat dwelt in þe toun 585
 Loue hir ſo hoot of foul affeccioun
 That verrayly him þouȝt he ſchulde ſpille
 But he of hire / oones had his wille 588

He wowith hir but it avayleþ nought 589
 Sche wolde do no synne by no weye
 And for deſpyt / he compaſſed in his þought
 To maken hir a ſchamful deþ to deye 592
 he wayteth whan þe Constable was aweye
 And pryuyly vpon a nyght he crepte
 In hermyngyldes chambre whil ſche ſlepte / 595

Wery forwaked in here Orisoun 596
 Slepeþ Conſtaunce and hermyngyld alſo
 This knight þurgh Satanas temptacioun
 Al ſoftely is to þe bed y-go 599

And kutte þe þrote of hermegild a two /
 And leyð þe bloody knyf/ by dame Constaunce
 And went his way þat god ȝeue him meschaunce 602

Sone after comp þis Constable hom agayn 603
 And eek alla þat was kyng of þat lond
 And say his wyf dispitously I-slayn
 For which ful oft / he wept and wrong his hond 606
 And in þe bed þe blodȝ knyf he fond
 By Dame Custaunce allas what might he say
 For verray woo / hir witt was al a-way 609

To kyng Alla was told al þis meschaunce [leaf 79] 610
 And eek/þe tyme and wher and eek þe wyse
 That in a schip was founden þis Constaunce
 As here bifore ȝe haue herd me deuyse / 613
 The kynges hert of pite gan agrise
 whan he saugh so benigne a creature
 Falle in disese and in mysauenture 616

For as þe lomb toward his deþ is brought / 617
 So stant þis Innocent bifore þe kyng
 This false knight þat haþ þis tresoun wrought
 Bereþ hir an hand þat sche hath don þis þing 620
 But neuer þe les þer was gret mornyng
 Among þe people and seyn þey can not gesse
 That sche had doon so gret a wikkednesse 623

For þey han seyen hir so vertuous 624
 And louyng hermegyld right as hir lyf
 Of þis bar witness euerich in þat hous
 Saue he þat slowȝ hermegyld with his knyf 627
 This gentil kyng haþ caught a gret motyf
 Of his witness and þought/ he wold enquire
 Deppere in þis cas a troupe to lere 630

- Allas Constaunce þou ne has no champioun 631
 Ne fighte canstow nat^t so welaway
 But^t he þat^t for oure redempcioun
 Bonde Sathan and ȝit^t liþ þer he lay 634
 So be þy stronge champioun þis day
 For but crist^t vpon þe miracle kythe
 withouten gilt^t þou schalt^t be slayn as swithe 637
- Sche set^t hir down on knees and þan sche sayde 638
 Immortal god þat^t sauedest^t Susanne
 For false blame and þou merciful mayde
 Mary I mene doughter of^t seint^t Anne 641
 Bifore whos child aungeles syng^t Osanne
 If I be gultles of^t þis felonye
 My socour be for elles schal I dye 644
- Haue ȝe not^t seye somtyme a pale face 645
 Among^t a prees of^t him þat^t haþ be lad
 Toward his deþ wher him geyneþ no grace /
 And such a colour in his face haþ had [leaf 79, back] 648
 Men mighte knowe his face was so bystad
 Among^t alle þe faces in þat route
 So stant Constance and lokeþ hire aboute / 651
- O queenes lyuyng^t in prosperite 652
 Duchesses and ȝe ladies euerychon
 haueþ som reuþe on hir aduersite
 An emperoures doughter stond allon 655
 Sche nath no wight^t to whom to make hir moon
 O blod ryal þat^t stondest^t in þis drede /
 Ferre be þy frendes at þy grete neede / 658
- This Alla kyng^t haþ such compassioun 659
 As gentil hert^t is fulfild of^t pite
 That^t from his eyen ran þe water down
 Now hastily do fech a book^t quod he / 662

And if þis knight wil swere how þat sche /
 This womman slow; ȝet wol we us avyse
 whom þat we wille schal be oure iustise 665

A britoun book I-write wiþ euaungiles 666
 was fette and on þis book/ he swor anoon
 Sche gultif was and in þe mene whiles
 An hond him smot vpon þe nekke boon 669
 That down he fel anon right at a stoon
 And boþe his yen brast out of his face
 In sight of every body in þat place 672

A vois was herd in general audience 673
 And seist þou hast disclaundred gultes
 The doughter of holy chirche in hire presence
 Thus hastow doon & ȝit I holde my pees 676
 Of þis meruaile agast was al þe prees
 As mased folk þey stooden euerychon
 For drede of wreche saue Custaunce allon 679

Gret was þe drede and eek þe repentaunce 680
 Of hem þat hadden gret suspeccioun
 vpon þe sely Innocent Custaunce
 And for þis miracle in conclusioun 683
 And by Custaunces mediacioun
 The kyng and many oþer in þe place
 Conuerted was / thanked be cristes grace [leaf 80] 686

This false knight was slayn for his vntrouþe / 687
 By Iuggement of Alla hastyly
 And ȝit Custaunce hap of his deþ gret rouþe
 And after þis ihus of his mercy 690
 Made alla wedde ful solempnely
 This holy mayde þat is bright and schene /
 And þus hap crist I-maad Constance a queene 693

But who was woful if I schal not lye / 694
 Of þis weddyng but Domegild and þo
 The kynges mooder ful of tyrannye
 hir þoughȝt hir cursed herte brast a-two 697
 Sche wolde nat hir sone had I-do so
 hir þoughȝt despyte / þat he schulde take
 So straunge a creature vnto his make 700

Me lust not of þe cast ne of þe stree 701
 Make so long a tale as of þe corn
 what schuld I telle of þe realte
 Of mariage / or which cours goþ biforn 704
 who bloweth in a trompe or in an horn
 The fruyt of euery tale is for to seye
 They ete & drynk / and daunce / and synge & pleye 707

They gon to bed as it was skile & right 708
 For þough þat wyfes ben ful holy þinges
 They moste take in pacience a night
 Such maner necessities as ben plesynges 711
 To folk that han I-wedded hem wiþ rynges
 And haluendel her holynesse ley a side
 And for þe tyme it may non oþer betyde 714

On hire he gat a knaue child anoon 715
 And to a bisschope & a Constable eeke
 he took his wyf to kepe whan he is goon
 To scotlandward his foomen for to seeke 718
 Now faire Custaunce þat is so humble & meeke
 So long is goon wiþ childe til þat stille
 Sche held hir chambre abidyng goddes wille 721

The tyme is come a knaue child sche bere 722
 Maurius atte funstone men him calle
 This Constabil doþ come forþ a messager [leaf 80, back]
 And wrot to his kyng þat cleped was Alle 725

how þat þis blisful tydyng^t is bifalle
 And oþer þinges spedful for to seye
 he takeþ þe *lettre* and forþ he goþ his weye 728

This messenger to doon his auantage 729
 vnto þe kynges moder he goþ ful swiþe
 And salueth hire / fair in his langage
 Ma dame *quod* he 3e may be glad and bliþe 732
 And þanke god an hundred þousand siþe
 My lady queen haþ child wiþouten doute
 To ioie and blis of al þe reame aboute 735

Lo heer þe *lettres* sealed of þis þing^t 736
 That I mot^t bere with al þe hast I may
 If 3e wole ouȝt^t vnto 3oure sone þe kyng^t
 I am 3oure seruau^t boþe night^t and day 739
 Doungyld answerde as now þis tyme nay
 But here al nyght^t I wol þou take þy rest^t
 To morwen I wil say þe what^t me lest^t 742

This messenger drank^t sadly ale and wyn 743
 And stolen were his *lettres* pryuely
 Out^t of his box whil he sleep as a swyn
 And countrefeet^t þey were subtilly 746
 Anoþer sche him wroot^t ful synfully
 vnto þe kyng^t direct / of þis matiere
 Fro his Constable as 3e schul after heere 749

The *lettre* spak^t þe queen delyuered was 750
 Of so orryble and feendly creature
 That in þe castel noon so hardy was
 That eny while dorste þerin endure / 753
 The mooder was an Elf by auenture
 Bycome by charmes or by sorcerie
 And euery man hatip hir companyne 756

Wo was þis kyng^t whan he þis letter had sein 757
 But^t to no wight^t he told his sorwes sore
 But^t of^t his owen hand he wrot^t agayn .
 welcome þe sond of^t crist^t for eueremore 760
 To me þat^t am now lerned in his lore
 lord welcome be þy lust^t and þy pleasaunce [leaf 81]
 My lust^t I putte al in þyn ordinaunce 763

Kepeth þis child al be it foul or fair 764
 And eek^t my wyf^t vnto myn hom comyng^t
 Crist^t whan him lust^t may sende me an hair
 More agreable þan þis to my likyng^t 767
 The *lettre* he seleth pryuyly wepyng^t
 which to þe messenger he took^t ful sone
 And forþ he goth þer nys no more to done 770

O messenger fulfild of^t dronkenesse 771
 Strong^t is þy breþ þy lymes faltren ay
 And þou bywreyest^t alle sykernesse
 Thy mynde is lorn þou ianglest^t as a Iay 774
 Thy face is torned al in a newe array
 Ther drunkenesse regneþ in eny route
 Ther is no counseil hid wiþouten doute 777

O Domegyld I haue non englisch digne 778
 vnto þy malice and þy tyrannye
 And perfor to þe feend I þe resigne
 let^t him endyten of^t þi treccherie 781
 Fy mannyssch fy .o. nay by god I lye
 Fy feendly spirit^t for I dar wel telle
 Though þou here walke þy spirit^t is in helle 784

This messenger comp^t fro þe kyng^t agayn 785
 And at^t þe kinges modres court^t he light^t
 And sche was of^t þis messenger ful fayn
 And pleseþ him in al þat^t euer sche might^t 788

he drankt and wel his gurdel vnderpight
 he slepeþ and he fareþ in his gyse
 Al nyght vnto þe sonne gan arise 791

Eft were his lettres stolen euerichon 792
 And countrefeted lettres in þis wise
 The kyng comaundeþ his constable anon
 vp payne of hangyng of an heiȝ Iustise 795
 That he schulde suffre in no maner wyse
 Constaunce in his regne for to abyde
 Thre dayes and a quarter of a tyde 798

But in þe same schip as he hir fond 799
 hire and hir ȝonge sone and al hire gere [leaf 81, back]
 he schulde putte and crowde fro þe londe
 And charge hire þat sche neuer eft come þere 802
 O my Constaunce wel may þy goost haue fere
 And slepyng in þy drem ben in penaunce
 whan Domegyl cast al þis ordynaunce / 805

This messenger a-morwe whan he awookt 806
 vnto þe castel held þe nexte way
 And to þe constable he þe lettre tookt
 And whan þat he þe pitous lettre say 809
 Ful ofte he seyð alas and welaway
 Lord crist quod he how may þis world endure
 So ful of synne is many a creature 812

O mighty god if þat it be þy wille 813
 Sep þou art rightful iugge how may þis be /
 That þou wolt suffre Innocentȝ to spille /
 And wikked folk regne in prosperite 816
 O good Constance alas so wo is me
 That I moot be þy tormentour or deye
 On schamful deþ þer is non oþer weye 819

Wepynge bope zong^t & olde in al þat place 820
 whan þat þe kyng^t þis corsed *lettre* sent^t
 And Constance with a dedly pale face
 The fayre day toward hir schip sche went 823
 But neuerþeles sche takeþ in good entent
 The wil of^t *crist* / and knelyng^t on þe grounde
 Sche sayde lord ay welcome be þy sonde 826

He þat me kepte fro þe false blame 827
 whil I was on þe lond amonges 3ou
 He can me kepe from harm & eek^t fro schame
 In þe see al þough I se nat^t how 830
 As strong^t as euer he was he is right^t now
 In him trust^t I. & in his mooder deere
 That^t is to me my sayl and eek^t my steere / 833

Hir litel child lay wepyng^t in hir arm 834
 And knelyng^t pitously to him sche sayde /
 Pees litle sone I wol do þe noon harm
 wiþ þat hir kerchef^t of hir hed sche brayde 837
 And ouer his litel y3en sche it layde [leaf 82]
 And in hir arm sche lullith it wel faste
 And vnto heuen hir ey3en vp sche caste 840

Moder *quod* sche and mayde bright^t marie 841
 Soþ is þat þurgh wommannes eggement
 Mankynde was lorn and dampned ay to dye
 For which þy child was on a cros torent 844
 Thyn blisful ey3en sawh al þis torment
 Then nys þer noon comparisoun bitwene
 Thy wo and any woo may nat^t sustene 847

Thow saugh þy child I-slaw byfor þyn yen 848
 And 3it^t now lyueþ my litel child par fay
 Now lady bright^t to whom alle woful cryen
 Thou glory of wommanhod þou faire may 851

Thou heuen of^t refute brighte sterre of^t day
 Rewe on my child þat^t of^t þyn gentilnesse /
 Rewest^t on euery synful in destresse 854

O litel child allas what^t is þi gilt 855
 That^t neuer wroughtest^t synne as zet^t par de
 why wil þyn harde fader han þe spilt
 O. mercy deere and Constable seyde sche 858
 And let^t my litel child here dwelle with þe
 And if^t þou darst^t not^t sauē him for blame /
 So kys him oones in his fadres name 861

Ther wiþ sche loked bakward to þe lond 862
 And seyde far wel housbond rewþeles
 And vp sche rist^t and walkeþ down þe stronde
 Toward þe schip hir folweþ al þe prees 865
 And euer sche preyep^þ hir child to hold his pees
 And took^t hir leue and wiþ an holy entent
 Sche blessep^þ hire and to þe schip sche went 868

Vytailled was þe schip it is no drede 869
 Abundauntly for hire ful longe space
 And oþer necessities þat^t schulde nede
 Sche had ynow³ heryed be criste³ grace 872
 For wynd and water almighty god purchase
 And bryng^t hir hom I can no bettre say
 But^t in þe see sche dryueþ forþ hir way 875

[PART III.]

Alla þe kyng^t comþ hom soon after þis [leaf 82, back] 876
 vnto þe Castel of^t þe which I tolde
 And askep^þ wher his wyf^t and his child ys
 The Constable gan aboute his herte colde 879

And playnly al þe maner he him tolde
 As ȝe han herd / I can telle it no better
 And schewed þe kynges seal and his letter 882

And seyde lord as ȝe comaunded me 883
 vp peyne of deþ so haue I do certayn
 This messenger tormented was til he
 Moste biknowe and telle it plat and playn · 886
 Fro nyght to night in what place he had layn ·
 And þus by witt/ and subtil enqueryng
 ymaged was by wham þis gan to spryng 889

The hand was knowen þat þe lettre wroot 890
 And al þe venym of þis cursed dede
 But in what wyse certeynly I noot
 Theffect is þis þat alla out of drede 893
 his moder slough as men may pleynly reede /
 For þat sche traytour was to hir ligeaunce
 Thus endeþ olde Domegild wiþ meschaunce 896

The sorwe þat/ þis alla night and day 897
 Makþ for his wyf and for his child also
 Ther is no tonge þat it telle may
 But now I wol vnto Custaunce go 900
 That fleetetþ in þe see in peyne and wo
 .V. ȝeer and more as likeþ cristes sonde
 Er þat hir schip approached vnto londe 903

Vnder an hethen castel atte last 904
 Of which þe name in my text nouȝt I fynde
 Constaunce and eek hir child þe see vpcast
 Almighty god þat saueth al mankynde / 907
 Haue on Constaunce and on hir child som mynde
 That fallen is in hethen hond eft sone
 In poynt to spille as I schal telle ȝou soone 910

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GROUP B. § 2. MAN OF LAW'S TALE. Harleian 7334.		185
Doun fro þe Castel comp þer many a wight		911
To gawren on þis schip and on Constaunce		
But schortly fro þe castel on a night		
The lordes styward God ȝiue him meschaunce	[leaf 83]	914
A þeeft þat had reneyed oure creaunce		
Com in to schip alone and seyð he scholde		
hir lemman be whepir sche wold or nolde		917
Wo was þis wrecched womman þo bigoon		918
hire childe criep and sche pytously		
But blisful mary hilp hir right anon		
For wiþ hir strengþe wel and mightily		921
The theef fel ouer boord al sodeinly		
And in þe see he drenched for vengauce		
And þus haþ crist vnwemmed kept Constance		924
O foule lust/ O luxurie lo þin ende /		925
Noughȝt oonly þat þou feyntest mannes mynde		
But verrayly þou wolt his body schende		
The ende of þyn werk or of þy lustes blynde		928
his compleynyng how many may men fynde		
That noughȝt for werk som tyme but for þentent		
To doon his synne ben eyþer slayn or schent /		931
How may þis weyke womman han þe strengþe		932
hir to defende aȝein þe renegat		
O Golias vnmesurable of lengþe		
how mighte dauid make þe so mate		935
So ȝong and of armure so desolate		
how dorst he loke vpon þyn dredful face		
wel may men seyn it nas but goddes grace		938
Who ȝaf Iudith corage or hardynesse /		939
To slen him Olefernes in his tent		
And to delyueren out þe wrecchednes		
The peple of god I say in þis entent		942

That right as good spiryte vigor sent
 To hem and saued hem out of meschaunce /
 So sent he might and vigor to Constaunce 945

Forth goþ hir schip þurghout þe narwe mouth 946
 Of Iubalter and Septe dryuyng ay
 Somtyme west som tyme north and south
 And somtyme Est ful many a wery way 949
 Til cristes mooder blessed be sche ay
 haþ schapen þurgh hir endeles goodnesse
 To make an ende of hir heynesse [leaf 83, back] 952

Now let vs stynt of Constance but a þrowe 953
 And speke we of þe Romain Emperour
 That out of Surrye haþ by lettres knowe
 The slaughter of cristen folk and deshonour 956
 Doon to his douȝter by a fals traytour
 I mene þe cursed and wikked sowdenesse
 That at þe fest leet slee boþe more and lesse 959

For which þis Emperour haþ sent anon 960
 his senatours with real ordynaunce
 And oþer lordes got wot many oon
 On surriens to take high vengauce 963
 They brenne / sleen / and bringen hem to meschaunce
 Ful many a day but schortly þis is þende
 homward to Rome þey schapen hem to wende 966

This Senatour repayreþ wiþ victorie 967
 To Romeward saylyng ful really
 And mette þe schip dryuyng as seiþ þe story
 In which Constance sitteþ ful pitously 970
 No þing ne knew he what sche was ne why
 Sche was in such aray / sche nolde seye
 Of hire astaat al þough sche scholde deye 973

He bryngeþ hir to Rome and to his wyf^t 974
 he ȝaf^t hir and hir ȝonge sone also
 And wiþ þe Senatour lad sche hir lyf^t
 Thus can our lady. bryngen out^t of woo 977
 woful Constance and many anoþer moo
 And longe tyme dwelled sche in þat^t place
 In holy werkes. as euer was hir grace / 980

The Senatoures wif^t hir aunte was 981
 But^t for al þat^t sche knew hir neuer more
 I wol no lenger taryen in þis cas
 But^t to kyng^t Alla which I spak^t of^t ȝore / 984
 That^t for his wyf^t wepeþ and sikeþ sore /
 I wol retorne / and lete I wol Constaunce
 vnder þe Senatoures gouernaunce 987

Kyng^t alla which þat^t had his mooder slayn 988
 vpon a day fel in such repentaunce /
 That^t if I schortly telle schal and playn [leaf 84]
 To Rome he comeþ to receyue his penaunce 991
 And putte him in þe popes ordynaunce
 In heigh and lowe and ihū crist^t bysought^t
 Forȝef^t his wikked werkes þat^t he wrought^t 994

The fame anon þurgh Rome toun is born 995
 how alla kyng^t schal come in pilgrymage
 By herberioures þat wenten him biforn
 For which þe Senatour as was vsage 998
 Rood him aȝein and many of^t his lynage
 As wel to schewen his magnificence
 As to doon eny kyng^t a reuerence 1001

Gret^t cheere doþ þis noble Senatour 1002
 To kyng^t Alla and he to him also
 Euerich of^t hem doþ oþer gret^t honour
 And so bifel þat^t on a day or two 1005

This Senatour is to kyng^t Alla go
 To fest^t and schortly if^t I schal not lye
 Constances sone / went in his companye 1008

Som men wold seyn at^t request^t of^t Custaunce 1009
 This Senatour hap^t lad^t þis child to feste
 I may not telle euery circumstaunce
 Be as be may þer was he atte leste 1012
 But soth it is right^t at^t his modres heste
 Byforn hem alle duryng^t þe metes space
 The child stood loking^t in þe kynges face 1015

This alla kyng^t hap^t of^t þe child gret^t wonder 1016
 And to þe Senatour he seyð anoon
 whos is þat^t faire child þat^t stondeþ 3onder
 I not^t quod he by god and by seynt^t Ion 1019
 A moder he hap^t but fader hap^t he non
 That I of^t woot^t and schortly in a stounde
 he told Alla how þat^t þis child was founde / 1022

But god woot quod þis senatour also 1023
 So vertuous a lyuer in my lyf^t
 Ne saugh I neuer such as sche nomo
 Of^t worldly womman mayden or of^t wyf^t 1026
 I dar wel say sche hadde leuer a knyf^t
 Thurghout^t hir brest^t þan ben a womman wikke [leaf 84, back]
 Ther is no man can bryng^t hir to þat^t prikke 1029

Now was þis child as lik^t vnto Custaunce 1030
 As possible is a creature to be
 This alla hap^t þe face in remembraunce
 Of Dame Custaunce and þer on mused he 1033
 If þat^t þe childes mooder were ought^t sche
 That^t is his wyf^t and pryuely he hight^t
 And sped him fro þe table þat^t he might^t 1036

Par fay pough^t he fantom is in myn heed 1037
 I ough^t to deme of^t righful Iuggement^t
 That^t in þe salte see my wyf^t is deed
 And afterward he made þis argument 1040
 what^t woot^t I wher crist^t hap hider sent
 My wyf^t by see as wel as he hir sent
 To my contre fro þennes þat^t sche went 1043

And after noom home wiþ þe senatour 1044
 Goth alla for to see þis wonder chaunce
 This Senatour doþ alla gret^t honour
 And hastily he sent after Custaunce 1047
 But^t trusteþ wel hir luste nat^t to daunce /
 whan þat^t sche wiste wherfore was þat^t sonde
 vnnethes on hir feet/ sche mighte stonde / 1050

Whan alla saugh his wyf fayre he hir grette 1051
 And wepte þat^t it^t was rewþe to se
 For at^t þe firste look^t he on hir sette
 he knew wel verrely þat^t it was sche 1054
 And for sorwe as domb sche stant as tre
 So was hire herte schett^t in his distresse
 whan sche remembred his vnkyndenesse 1057

Twies sche swowned in his owen sight^t 1058
 he wept^t and him excuseþ pitously
 Now god quod he and alle his halwes bright^t
 So wisly on my soule haue mercy 1061
 That^t of^t þoure harm as gulteles am I
 As is maurice my sone so lyk^t þoure face
 Elles þe feend me fecche out of þis place / 1064

Long was þe sobbyng^t and þe bitter peyne 1065
 Or þat^t here woful herte mighte cesse [leaf 85]
 Gret^t was þe pite for to here hem pleyne
 Thurgh whiche playnt^z gan here wo encrease 1068

I pray ȝou alle my labour to relesse
 I may not telle al here sorwe vnto morwe
 I am so wery for to speke of þe sorwe / 1071

But fynally whan þat the soþ is wist 1072
 That alla gilteles was of hir woo
 I trowe an hundred tymes þey ben kist
 And such a blys is þer bitwix hem tuo 1075
 That saue þe ioye þat lasteþ eueremo
 Ther is noon lyk þat eny creature
 haþ seyn or schal. whil þat þe world may dure 1078

Tho prayde sche hir housbond meekely 1079
 In þe relees of hir pytous pyne
 The he wold preye hir fader specially
 That of his maieste he wold enclyne 1082
 To vouche sauft som tyme with him to dyne
 Sche preyed him eek he schulde by no weye
 Vnto hir fader no word of hir seye 1085

Som men wold seye þat hir child Maurice 1086
 Doþ his message vnto þe Emperour
 But as I gesse alla was nat so nyce
 To him þat is so souerayn of honour 1089
 As he þat is of cristes folk þe flour
 Sent eny child but it is best to deeme
 he went himsilf and so it may wel seme / 1092

This Emperour haþ graunted gentilly 1093
 To come to dyner as he him bysought
 As wel rede I he loked besily
 vpon þe child and on his douȝter þought 1096
 Alla goþ to his In and as him ought
 Arrayed for þis fest in euery wyse
 As ferforth as his connyng may suffice 1099

The morwe cam and alla gan him dresse 1100
 And eek^t his wyf^t þe Emperour for to meete
 And for þey ryde in ioie and in gladnesse /
 And whan sche saugh hir fader in þe streete 1103
 Sche light^t a doun and falleþ him to feete [leaf 85, back]
 Fader *quod* sche 3our 3onge child Constance
 Is now ful clene ou of^t 3our remembraunce 1106

I am 3our doughter Custaunce *quod* sche 1107
 That^t whilom 3e haue sent^t vnto Surrye
 It^t am I fader þat^t in þe salte see
 was put^t alloon and dampned for to dye 1110
 Now goode fader mercy I 3ou crye
 Send me no more vnto noon hethenesse
 But^t þanke my lord her of^t his kyndenesse 1113

Who can þe pytous Ioye telle al 1114
 Bitwix hem þre siþ þey be þus I-mette
 But^t of^t my tale make an ende I schal
 The day goþ fast^t I wol no lenger lette 1117
 This glade folk^t to dyner þey ben sette
 In ioie and blys at^t mete I let^t hem dwelle
 A þousand fold wel more þan I can telle . 1120

This child Maurice was sippen Emperour 1121
 I-maad by þe pope and lyued cristenly
 To cistes chirche dede he gret^t honour
 But^t I let^t al his story passen by 1124
 Of Custaunce is my tale specially
 In olde Romayn gestes men may fynde
 Maurices lyf^t I bere it nought^t in mynde 1127

This kyng^t alla whan he his tyme say 1128
 with his Constance his holy wyf^t so swete
 To Engelond þey com þe righte way
 wher as þey lyue in ioie and in quyetē 1131

But litel whil it last I ȝou biheete :
 Ioy of þis world // for tyme wol not abyde
 Fro day to night it chaungeth as þe tyde 1134

Who lyued euer in such delyt a day 1135
 That him ne meued eyþer his conscience
 Of Ire or talent / or som maner affray
 Enuy or pride or passioun or offence 1138
 I ne say but for þis ende þis sentence
 But litel whil in ioye or in plesaunce
 lasteþ þe blis / of alla with Custaunce 1141

For deth þat takþ of heigh & low his rent [leaf 86] 1142
 whan passed was a ȝeere as I gesse /
 Out of þis worlde / kyng alla he hent
 For whom Custauns. haþ ful gret heuynesse / 1145
 Now let vs pray. þat god his soule blesse /
 And dame Custaunce fynally to say
 Toward þe toun of Rome goþ hir way 1148

To Rome is come þis nobil creature 1149
 And fynt hir freendes þer boþe hool & sound
 Now is sche skaped al hir auenture
 And whanne sche hir fader had I-founde 1152
 Doun on hir knees falleþ sche to grounde
 wepyng for tendirnes in herte blithe
 Sche heried god an hundred þousand sithe 1155

In vertu and in holy almesdede 1156
 They lyuen alle. and neuer a sondre wende
 Til deþ departe hem þis lyf þey lede
 And far now wel my tale is at an ende 1159
 Now ihū crist þat of his might may sende /
 Ioy after wo gouerne vs in his grace /
 And keep ous alle. þat ben in þis place / 1162

Toward þis ilke daunce I drough ful 3erne /
 In hope þat som wisdom schuld I lerne /
 But certeynly er I com fully þere
 Vanysshid was þis daunce he nyste where / 996
 No creature saugh he þat bar lif
 Sauþ on þe greene he saugh sittynge a wyf /
 A fouler wight þer may no man deuyse
 A3ens þe knight þis olde wyf gan ryse 1000
 And sayder *sir* knight heer forth lith no way
 Tel me what. 3e seekyn by 3our fay
 Par aduenture. it may þe better be /
 Thise olde folk can mochil þing quod sche 1004
 My lieue modir quod þis knight certayn
 I am but ded but if þat I can sayn
 what þing is it. þat wommen most desire
 Couþe 3e me wisse. I wold wel quyt 3our huyre / 1008
 Plight me þy trouth. her in myn hond quod sche [*lf 99, bk*]
 The nexte þing þat I require þe
 Thou schalt it doo if it be in þy might
 And I wol telle it þe er it be night 1012
 haue her my troupe quod þe knight I graunte
 Thanne quod sche I dar me wel anaunte
 þy lif is sauþ for I wol stonde þer by
 vpon my lif þe queen wol say as I 1016
 let se which is þe proudest of hem alle
 þat werith on a couerchief or a calle
 þat dar say nay of þing I schal þe teche
 let vs go forth wipouten more speche 1020
 Tho rowned sche a pistil in his eere
 And bad him to be glad and haue no fere
 whan þay ben comen to þe court þis knight
 Sayd he had holde. þat day þat he hight 1024
 Al redy was his answer as he sayde
 Ful many a noble wyf and many a mayde
 And many a wydow for þat þay ben wyse
 The queen herself sittynge as a Iustise 1028

Assemblid ben his answer for to hiere
 And afterward þis knight^t was bode appiere
 To euery wight^t comaundid was cilence
 And þat^t þe knight^t schuld telle in audience 1032
 what^t þing^t þat^t worldly wommen louen best^t
 ¶ þe knight^t ne stood not^t stille as doþ a best^t
 But^t to þe question anoon answerde
 wiþ manly voys þat al the court^t it herde 1036
 My liege lady generally quod he
 wommen desiren to haue soueraynte
 As wel ouer hir housbond as ouer hir loue
 And for to be in maystry him aboue 1040
 This is þe most^t desir þough 3e me kille /
 Doþ as 3ow list^t I am heer at^t 3our wille
 In al þe court ne was þer wyf^t ne mayde
 Ne wydow þat^t contraried þat^t he sayde 1044
 But^t sayden he. was worþy haue his lif^t
 And wiþ þat^t word vp start^t þat olde wif^t
 which þat^t þe knight^t saugh sitting^t on þe grene [leaf 100]
 Mercy quod sche my soueraigne lady queene 1048
 Er þat^t 3our court^t departe doþ me right^t
 I taughte þis answer vnto þe knight^t
 For which he plighte me his troupe there
 The firste þing^t þat^t I wold him requere 1052
 he wold it^t do if^t it^t lay in his might^t
 Bifore þe court^t þen pray I þe sir knight^t
 Quod sche þat^t þou me take vnto þy wif^t
 For wel þou wost^t þat^t I haue kept^t þy lif^t 1056
 If I say fals sey nay vpon þy fey
 This knight^t answerd allas and waylawey
 I wot^t right^t wel þat^t such was my byhest^t
 For goddes loue as chese a ne request^t 1060
 Tak^t al my good and let my body go
 Nay quod sche þan I schrew vs boþe tuo
 For þough þat^t I be foule old and poure
 I nolde for al þe metal ne for þe oure 1064

That vnder erthe is graue or lith aboue
 But I þy wife. were and eekþ þy loue
 My loue quod he. nay nay. my dampnacioun
 Allas þat eny of my nacioun 1068
 Schuld euer so foule disparagid be
 But/ al for noughtþ. þe ende is þis þat he
 Constreigned was. he needes most hir wedde
 And takith his wyfþ and goþ wiþ hir to bedde 1072
 ¶ Now wolden som men say par aduenture
 That for my neegligence I do no cure
 To telle 3ow þe ioye and tharray
 That at þat festþ was maad þat ilke day 1076
 To which þingþ schortly answeren I schal
 And say þer nas feste ne ioy at al
 Ther nas but heuynes and mochil sorwe
 For priuely he weddyd hir in a morwe 1080
 And alday hudde him. as doþ an oule
 So wo was him his wyfþ loked so foule
 Gretþ was þe wo. þe knightþ had in his þought
 whan he was with his wyfþ on bedde broughtþ 1084
 He walwith and he torneth to and fro [leaf 100, back]
 his olde wyfþ lay smylyngþ euer mo
 And sayd o deere housbond benedicite¹ [¹ MS. bñdicite]
 Fareth euery knightþ wiþ his wyfþ as 3e / 1088
 Is þis þe lawe of kingþ arthures hous
 Is euery knightþ of his þus daungerous
 I am 3our oughne loue / and 3our wyfþ
 I am sche þatþ hath sauýd 3our lyfþ 1092
 And certes ne dede I 3ow neuer vnrightþ
 why fare 3e þus with me þe firste nightþ
 3e fare likþ a man þatþ had leftþ his wit/
 whatþ is my gultþ. for godes loue tel me it 1096
 And itþ schal be amendid ifþ þatþ I may
 Amendid quod þis knightþ allas nay nay
 Itþ wol noughtþ ben amendid neuer mo
 Thow artþ so loply and so old also 1100

And þerto comen of so lowh a kynde
 That litil wonder is þough I walwe and wynde
 So wolde god myn herte wolde brest
 Is þis quod sche þe cause of þour vnrest 1104
 3e certeynly quod he no wonder is
 Now sire quod sche I coupe amende al þis
 If þat me list er it were dayes þre /
 So wel 3e mighte bere þow to me 1108
 But for 3e speken of such gentillesse
 As is descendit out of old richesse
 Therfor schuld 3e. ben holden gentil men
 Such arrogaunce. is not worth an hen 1112
 lok who þat is most vertuous alway
 Priue and pert and most entendiþ ay
 To do þe gentil dedes þat he can
 Tak him for þe grettest gentil man 1116
 Crist wol we clayme of him oure gentillesse
 Nought of oure eldres for our gret richesse
 For þough þey 3iue vs al her heritage
 For which we clayme to be of high parage 1120
 3it may þay not biqueþe for no þing
 To noon of vs so vertuous lyuyng
 That made hem gentil men y-callid be [leaf 101]
 And bad vs folwe hem in such degre 1124
 wel can þe wyse poet of Florence
 That hatte Daunt speke of þis sentence /
 Lo in such maner of rym is Dauntes tale
 Ful seeld vprisith by his braunchis smale / 1128
 Prowes of man. for god of his prowessse
 wol þat we clayme of him our gentillesse
 For of our auncestres. we no þing clayme
 But temporal þing þat men may hurt and mayme 1132
 Ek euery wight wot þis as wel as I
 If gentiles were plaunted naturelly
 Vnto a certayn lignage doun þe line
 Priue ne apert/. þay wolde neuer fine 1136

To don of^t gentilesce þe fair office
 Thay might^t nought^t doon no vileny or vice
 Tak^t fuyr and ber it^t in þe derkest^t hous
 Bitwixe þis . and þe mount Cankasous 1140
 And let^t men schit^t. þe dores and go þenne
 3it^t wol þe fuyr as fair and lighte brenne
 As twenty þousand men might^t it^t biholde
 his office naturel ay wol it holde 1144
 vp peril on my lif^t til þat^t it dye
 her / may 3e se wel how þat genterye
 Is nought^t annexid to possessioun
 Sithins folk^t ne doon her operacioun 1148
 Alway as doth þe fuyr lo in his kynde
 For god it wot^t men may ful often fynde
 A lordes sone do schame and vilonye
 And he þat^t wol haue pris of^t his gentrie 1152
 For he was boren of^t a gentil hous
 And had his eldres noble and vertuous
 And nyl himselue . doo no gentil dedis
 Ne folw his gentil aunceter þat^t deed is 1156
 he is nought^t gentil be he duk^t or erl.
 For vileyn synful deedes makeþ a cherl.
 For gentilnesse nys but^t renome
 Of þin auncetres for her heigh^t bounte 1160
 which is a straunge þing^t to þy persone [leaf 101, back]
 Thy gentilesce comeþ fro god alloone
 Than comþ oure verray gentilesse of^t grace
 It^t was no þing^t biquethe vs wiþ oure place 1164
 Thinkeþ how nobil as saith valerius
 was þilke tullius hostilius
 That^t out^t of^t pouert / ros to high noblesse
 Redith Senek/. and redith eek/ Boece. 1168
 Ther schuln 3e se expresse þat^t no dred is
 þat^t he is gentil þat doþ gentil dedis
 And þerfor lieue housbond I conclude
 Al were it that^t myn auncetres wer rude 1172

3it may þe highe god and so hope I
 Graunte me grace to lyue vertuously
 Than am I gentil whan þat I bygynne
 To lyue vertuously and weyuen synne 1176
 And þer as 3e of povert me repreue
 The heighe god on whom þat we bilieue
 In wilful pouert ches to lese his lif
 And certes euery man. mayden or wif 1180
 May vnderstonde þat I heuē king
 Ne wold not chese. a vicious lyuyng
 Glad pouert is an honest ping certayn
 This wol Senek and oþer clerkes sayn 1184
 who þat holt him payd of his pouert
 I hold him riche. al had he nouȝt a schert
 he þat coueitith is a pore wight
 For he wold haue þat is not in his might 1188
 But he þat nouȝt haþ. ne coueyteth nouȝt/ to haue
 Is riche al þough 3e hold him but a knaue
 Verray pouert is synne proprely
 Iuuenal saith of pouert merily 1192
 ¶ The pore man whan he goþ by þe way
 Bifore þe theues he may synge and play
 Pouert is hateful and as I gesse /
 A ful gret brynger out of busynesse / 1196
 A gret amender eek of Sapiens
 To him þat takith it in paciens
 Pouert is þis al þough it seme elenge [leaf 102]
 Possessioun þat no wight wil chalenge 1200
 ∴ Pouert ful often whan a man is lowe
 Makith him his god and eek himself/ to knowe
 ∴ Pouert a spectacle is as þinkith me
 þurgh which he may his verray frendes se 1204
 And þerfor sir syth þat I ȝow nought greue
 Of my pouert no more 3e me repreue
 // Now sir of elde 3e repreue me
 And certes sir þough noon auctorite 1208

were in no book' 3e gentils of' honour
 Sayn þat' men schuld an old wight doon fauour
 And clepe him fader for 3our gentillesse
 And certes I schal fynden as I gesse 1212
 Than drede 3ou nought' to ben a cokewold
 Now þer þat' 3e sayn I am foul and old
 For filthe and elde also mot' I the
 Ben grete wardeyns vpon chastite / 1216
 But' natheles sith I knowe 3our delyt'
 I schal fulfille 3oure worldly appetyt'
 Chese now quod sche oon of' þese þinges tweye
 To haue me foul and old til þat I deye 1220
 And be to 3ow a trewe humble wyf'
 And neuer 3ow displease in al my lyf'
 Or elles 3e wol haue me 3ong' and fair
 And take 3our auenture of' þe repair 1224
 þat' schal be to 3our hous by cause of' me
 Or in som oþer place may wel be
 Now chese 3our seluen whethir þat' 3ow likith
 This knight' auysith him and sore sikith 1228
 But' atte last' he sayd in þis manere
 My lady and my loue. and my wif' so deere
 I putte me in 3our wyse gouernaunce
 Chesith 3our self' which may be most' pleasaunce 1232
 And most' honour to 3ow and me also
 I do no fors þe wheþer of' þe tuo
 For as 3ow likith it' suffisith me
 Than haue I gete of' 3ow þe maystry quod sche / 1236
 Sith I may gouern and chese as me list/ [leaf 102, back]
 3e certis wyf' quod he I hold it best'
 kys me quod sche we ben no lenger wrope
 For by my troupe. I wol be to 3ow boþe 1240
 This is to say 3e boþe fair and good
 I pray to god þat' I mot' sterue wood
 But/ I be to 3ow also good and trewe
 As euer was wyf' sippen þe world was newe 1244

And but/ I be to morow as fair to seen
 As eny lady emperesse or queen
 That is bitwixe thest and eek þe west
 Doth by my lyf. right euen as ȝow lest 1248
 Cast vp þe cortyns and look what þis is
 And whan þe knyght saugh verrayly al þis
 That sche so fair was and so ȝong þer to
 For ioie he hent hir in hir armes tuo 1252
 his herte bathid in a bath of blisse
 A thousand tyme on rowe he gan hir kisse
 And sche obeyed him in euery þing
 That mighte doon him pleisauns or likyng 1256
 And þus þay lyue vnto her lyues end
 In parfyt ioie and ihū crist vs sende
 housbondes meke ȝonge and freissche on bedde
 And grace to ouerbyde hem þat we wedde 1260
 And eek I pray to Ihū schort her lyues
 That wil nought be gouerned after her wyues
 And old and angry nygardes of despense
 God send hem sone verray pestilence / 1264
 ¶ Here endith þe wif of Bathe hire tale

[No break in the MS.]

¶ Here bygynneþ þe prologe of þe Freres tale

THis worthy lymytour þis noble Frere
he made alway a lourynghe cheere
vpon the sompnour. but for honeste /

No vileyns worde. 3it to him spak he 1268

But atte last he sayd vnto þe wyf

Dame quod he. god 3iue 3ow good lyf

3e han her touchid al so mot I the

In scole matier gret difficulte 1272

3e han sayd mochel þing right wel I say [leaf 103]

But dame right as we ryden by þe way

Vs needeþ nou3t but for to speke of game

And lete auctorites in goddes name 1276

To preching and to scoles of clergie /

But if it like to þis companye /

I wil 3ow of a sompnour telle a game

Par de 3e may wel knowe by þe name 1280

That of a sompnour may no good be sayd

I pray 3ow þat noon of 3ow be euel a-payd

A Sompnour is a renner vp and doun

wip maundement3 for fornicacioun 1284

And is y-bete at euery tounes eende /

Our oste spak / a sir 3e schold been heende /

And curteys as a man of 3our estaat

In company we wol haue no debaat 1288

Telleþ 3our tale and let þe sompnour be

Nay quop þe sompnour let him say to me

what so him list whan it comeþ to my lot

By god I schal him quyten euery grot 1292

I schal him telle which a gret honour

Is to ben a fals flateryng lymytour [Lines 1307-8 follow wrongly
here in the Six Texts.]

And his offis I schal him telle I-wis

Our host answerd and sayd þe sompnour þis 1296

And after þis he sayd vnto þe Frere

Telleþ forþ 3our tale my maister deere

[No gap in the MS.]

¶ Narrat.

Whilom þer was duellyng^t in my countre
 An erchedeken a man of^t gret^t degre 1300
 That^t boldeley did execucioun
 In punyschyng^t of^t fornicacioun
 Of^t wiccheecraft^t and eek^t of^t Bauderye
 Of^t diffamaciouⁿ and auoutrie / 1304
 Of^t chirchereues and of^t testaments
 Of^t contractes and of^t lak^t of^t sacraments
 And eek^t of^t many anoþer cryme [These 2 lines are misplaced, as
1295-6, in the Six Texts.]
 which nedip^t not^t to reherse at^t þis tyme 1308
 Of^t vsur and of^t Symony also
 But^t certes lecchours did he grettest^t woo.
 Thay schulde synge if^t þay were hent^t [leaf 103, back]
 And smale tyþers þay were foully schent^t 1312
 If^t eny persoun wold vpon hem pleyne
 Ther might^t astert/ him no pecunial peyne
 For smale tyþes and for smal offrynge
 he made þe poeple pitously to synge 1316
 For er þe bisshop caught^t him in his hook^t
 þay weren in þe archedeknes book^t
 And hadde þurgh his iurediccioⁿ
 Power to haue of^t hem correccioun 1320
 he had a sompnour redy to his hond
 A slyer boy was noon in Engeland
 Ful priuely he had his espiaile
 That^t taughte him wher he might^t auayle 1324
 he couþe spare of^t lecchours oon or tuo
 And techen him to four and twenty mo
 For þough þis sompnour wood were as an hare
 To telle his harlottry I wol not^t spare 1328

For we ben out of here correccioun
 Thay haue of vs no iurediccioun
 Ne neuer schul to terme of alle her lyues
 Peter so been þe wommen of þe styues 1332
 Thay beþ I-put out of oure cures
 Pees with meschaunce and wiþ mesauentures
 þus sayd our host and let him telle his tale /
 Now telleþ forþ al þough þe sompnour gale 1336
 Ne spareþ nought myn owne maister deere
 þis false þeef þe sompnour quop þe frere ./
 Had alway bawdes redy to his hond
 As eny hauk to lure in engelond 1340
 þat told him al þe secre þat þay knewe
 For here acqueintaunce was not come of newe
 þay were his approwours priuely
 He took himself a gret profyt þer by 1344
 His maister knew nat alway what he wan
 wiþoute maundement / a lewed man
 He couþe sompne vp peyne of cristes curs
 And þay were glad to fille wel his purs. / 1348
 And make him grete festis atte nale / [leaf 104]
 And right as Iudas hadde purses smale /
 And was a theef. right such a þeef was he
 his maister had not half his duete 1352
 he was if I schal giue him his laude.
 A þeef a sompnour and eek a baude.
 And he had wenches at his retenue
 That whepir þat sir Robert or sir hughe 1356
 Or Iak or Rauf or who-so þat it were
 That lay by hem þay told it in his eere
 Thus was þe wenche and he of oon assent
 And he wold fecche a feyned maundement 1360
 And sompne hem to chapitre boþe tuo
 And pyle þe man and let þe wenche go
 Than wold he sayn I schal frend for þy sake
 Don strike þe out of oure lettres blake 1364

The þar no more as in þis cas trauayle
 I am þy frend þer I þe may avayle
 Certeynly he knew of^t bribours mo
 Than possible is to telle in 3eres tuo 1368
 For in þis world nys dogge for þe bowe
 þat^t can an hurt^t deer from an hol y-knowe
 Bet^t þan þis sompnour knew a leccheour
 Or auoutier or ellis a paramour 1372
 And for þat^t was þe fruyt^t of^t al his rent^t
 Therfore þer on he set^t al his entent^t
 And so bifel þat^t oones on a day
 This sompnour euer wayting^t on his pray 1376
 Rod forth to sompne a widew and old ribibe
 Feynyng^t a cause for he wolde bribe
 And happed þat^t he say bifore him ryde
 A gay 3eman vnder a forest^t syde 1380
 A bow he bar and arwes bright^t and kene
 He had vpon a courtepy of^t grene
 An hat^t vpon his heed wiþ frenges blake
 Sir quod þis sompnour heyl and wel ouertake 1384
 welcome quod he and euery good felawe
 whider ridestow vnder þis grene schawe
 Sayde þis 3iman wiltow fer to day [leaf 104, back]
 This sompnour answerd and sayde nay 1388
 Her faste by quod he is myn entent
 To ryden for to reysen vp a rent
 That^t longith to my lordes duete
 Artow þan a bayely quod he / 1392
 He durste not^t for verray filth and schame
 Sayn þat^t he was a sompnour for þe name
 De par dieux quod þe 3eman lieue broþer
 Thou art^t a bayly. and I am another 1396
 I am vnknownen as in þis contre
 Of þin acquaintance I wol praye þe
 And eek^t of^t broþerheed it^t 3ow lest^t
 I haue gold and siluer in my chest^t 1400

If that þe happe come in to oure schire
 Al schal be þin right as þou wolt desire
 Graunt mercy quod þis sompnour by my faith /
 Euerich in otheres hond his trouthe laith 1404
 For to be sworne breþeren til þay deyen
 In daliaunce forþ þay ride and pleyen
 This Sompnour which þat was as ful of iangles
 As ful of venym ben þese very-angles 1408
 And euer enquering vpon euery þing
 Broþer quod he wher now is þour dwellyng
 Anoper day if þat I schuld þow seeche
 This þiman him answerd in softe speche 1412
 Broþer quod he fer in þe norþ contre
 wher as I hope somtyme I schal þe se
 Er we depart I schal þe so wel wisse
 That of myn hous ne schaltow neuer misse 1416
 Now broþer quod þis sompnour I þow pray
 Teche me whil þat we ryden by þe way
 Syn þat þe ben a baily as am I
 Som subtilte as tel me faithfully 1420
 In myn office. how þat I may wynne.
 And spare not for consciens or for synne /
 But as my broþer tel me how do þe
 Now by my trouthe brothir myn sayd he / 1424
 As I schal telle þe a faithful tale [leaf 105]
 My wages ben ful streyt and eek ful smale
 My lord to me is streyt and daungerous
 And myn office is ful laborous 1428
 And perfor by extorciouns I lyue
 For soþ I take al þat men wil me þiue
 Algate by sleighte or by violence
 Fro þer to þer I wynne my despence 1432
 I can no better telle faithfully
 Now certes quod þis sompnour so fare I
 I spare not to take god it woot
 But if it be to heuy or to hoot 1436

what I may gete . in counseil priuely
 No more consciens of þat haue I
 Nere myn extorcions I might not lyuen
 Ne of such iapes I wil not be schriuen 1440
 Stomak ne conscience . know I noon
 I schrew þes schriftfadres euerychoon
 wel be we met by god and by seint Iame
 But leue broþer telle me þy name 1444
 Quod þis sompnour in þis mene while
 This ȝeman gan a litel for to smyle
 Broþir quod he woltow þat I þe telle
 I am a feend my dwellyng is in helle 1448
 And her I ryde about my purchasyng
 To wite wher men wol ȝiue me eny þing
 My purchas is þeffect of al my rent
 loke how þou ridest for þe same entent / 1452
 To wyne good þou rekkist neuer how
 Right so fare I for ryde I wolde now
 vnto þe worldes ende for a pray
 A quod þe sompnour benedicite what ȝe say 1456
 I wende ȝe were a ȝeman trewely
 ȝe han a mannes schap as wel as I
 haue ȝe a figure . þan determinate
 In helle þer ȝe ben in ȝour estate / 1460
 Nay certeynly quod he þer haue we non
 But whan vs likith we can make vs on
 Or ellis make ȝow seme þat we ben schape [leaf 105, back]
 Som tyme like a man or like an ape 1464
 Or lik aungel can I ryde or go
 It is no wonder þing þough it be so
 A lousy iogelour can decyue þe
 And parfay ȝit / can I more craft þan he 1468
 ¶ why quod þis sompnour ryde ȝe þan or goon
 In sondry wyse and nouȝt alway in oon
 For quod he we wol vs in such forme make
 As most abil is . oure pray to take / 1472

what makith 3ow to haue al þis labour
 Ful many a cause lieue sir sompnour
 Sayde þis feend. but al þing hath a tyme
 þe day is schort and it is passed prime 1476
 And 3it ne wan I no þing in þis day
 I wol entent to wynnyng if I may
 And not entende oure þinges to declare /
 For broþer myn þy wit is al to bare 1480
 To vnderstond al þough I told hem þe
 For but þou axid. whi laboure we /
 For som tyme we ben goddis instrumentes
 And menes to don his comaundementes 1484
 whan þat him list vpon his creatures
 In diuers act. and in diuers figures
 wipouten him we haue no might certeyn
 If þat him liste. stonde þer ageyn 1488
 And som tyme at our prayer haue we leue
 Only þe body and not þe soule greue /
 witnes on Iope whom we dide ful wo
 And somtyme haue we might of boþe tuo 1492
 This is to say of body and soule eke
 And som tyme be we suffred for to seeke
 vpon a man and doon his soule vnrest/
 And not his body and al is for þe best 1496
 whan he wipstondith oure temptacioun
 It is a cause of his sauacioun
 Al be it so. it was nought oure entent
 he schuld be sauf. but þat we wold him hent 1500
 And som tyme we ben seruaunt vnto man [leaf 106]
 As to therchebisschope seynt Dunstan
 And to thapostolis seruaunt was I
 3it tel me quod þe sompnour faithfully 1504
 Make 3e 3ow. newe bodies alway
 Of element3. þe fend answerde nay
 Som tyme we feyne. and somtyme we ryse
 wip dede bodies. in ful wonder wyse 1508

And speke renably . and as fair and wel
 As to þe Phitonissa dede Samuel
 And ȝit wol somme say . it was not he
 I do no fors . of ȝour diuinite 1512
 But oon þing warne I þe I wol not iape .
 þou wilt algates wite how we ben schape .
 Thow schalt her afterward my broþer deere
 Com wher þe nedith no þing for to leere 1516
 For thou schalt by þin oughn experience
 Conne in a chayer reden of þis sentence
 Bet þan *virgile* whils he was on lyue /
 Or Daunt also / now let vs ryde blyue 1520
 For I wol holde company with þe
 Til it be so þat þou forsake me
 Nay quod þe sompnour þat schal nought betyde
 I am a ȝiman þat knowen is ful wyde 1524
 My troupe wol I hold as in þis caas
 For þough þou be þe deuyl Sathanas
 My troupe wol I holde . to þe my broþer
 As I am swore . and ech of vs to oþer 1528
 For to be trewe breþeren in þis caas
 For boþe we goon abouten oure purchas
 Tak þou þi part and þat men wil þe ȝyuen
 And I schal myn þus may we boþe lyuen 1532
 And if eny of us . haue more þan oþer
 Let him be trewe . and part it wiþ his broþer
 I graunte quod þe deuel by my fay /
 And wiþ þat word þay riden forth her way 1536
 And right at þentryng of a townes ende /
 To which þis sompnour schope him for to wende
 Thay seigh a cart that chargid was with hay [*leaf 106, back*]
 which þat a carter drof forþ in his way / 1540
 Deep was þe way for which þe carte stood
 This carter smoot and cryde as he wer wood
 hayt . brok . hayt . scot . / what spare ȝe for þe stoones
 þe fend quod he . ȝow fech body and bones 1544

As ferforthly as euer wer 3e folid
 So moche wo as I haue with 3ow tholid
 The deuyl haue al boþe cart. and hors and hay
 This sompnour sayde her schal we se play 1548
 And ner þe feend he drough as nouȝt ne were
 Ful priuely and rouned in his eere
 herke my broþer herke by þi faith
 Ne herest' nought' þou. what' þe carter saith 1552
 hent' it anon . for he hap ȝiuen it þe
 boþe hay and caples and eek' his cart' parde
 ¶ Nay quod þe deuyl god wot' neuer a del
 It is nought' his entente trustith wel 1556
 Ask' it' þiself' if' þou not' trowist' me
 Or ellis stint' a while and þou schalt' se
 This carter thakketh his hors vpon the croupe
 And þay bygon to drawen and to stowpe 1560
 hayt' now quod he ther. Ihu crist' 3ow blesse
 And al his hondwerk' boþe more and lesse
 That' was wel twight' myn oughne lyard boy
 I pray god saue þy body and seint loy 1564
 Now is my cart' out' of' þe sloo par de
 Lo broþer quod þo feend what' told I þe
 Her may 3e seen. myn owne deere broþer
 The carter spak' oon þing'. and þought' anoper 1568
 Let' vs go forth. abouten our viage
 hier wyne I noþing' vpon cariage
 whan þat' þay comen som what' out of' toune
 This sompnour to his broþir gan to rounne 1572
 Brothir quod he. her wonyth an old rebekke
 That' had almost'. as lief' to leese hir necke /
 As for to ȝiue a peny of' hir good
 I wol' pens þough þat' sche go wood 1576
 Or I wol somone hir to oure office [leaf 107]
 And ȝit' god wot' I know of' hir no vice
 But' for þou canst' not' as in þis contre
 wyne þy cost' tak' her ensample of' me 1580

This sompnour clapped at þe widowes gate
 Com out quod he þou olde viritrate
 I trowe þou hast som frere or prest wip þe
 who clappith þer sayd þis widow benedicite 1584
 God saue þow sir. what is þour swete wille
 I haue quod he. a somonaunce of a bille
 vp payne of cursyng loke þat þou be
 To morwe biforn our erchedeknes kne 1588
 To answer to þe court of certeyn þinges
 Now quod sche Ihū crist and king of kinges
 So wisly helpe me as I ne may
 I haue ben seek and þat ful many a day 1592
 I may not goon so fer quod sche ne ryde
 But I be deed so prikith it in my syde
 May I nat aske a lybel sir Sompnour
 And answer þer. by my procuratour 1596
 To suche þing as. men wol oppose me
 3is quod þis sompnour. pay anon let se
 Twelf pens to me and I þe wil acquite
 I schal no profyt haue þer-by but lite 1600
 My mayster hath þe profyt and not I
 Com of and let me ryden hastily
 3if me my twelf pens I may no lenger tary
 Twelf pens quod sche. now lady seinte mary 1604
 So wisly help me. out of care and synne
 þis wyde world. þough þat I schulde wyne
 Ne haue I not · xij · pens wipinne myn hold
 3e knowen wel þat I am pore and old 1608
 kithe þoure almes on me pore wrecche
 Nay þan quod he. þe foule fend me fecche
 If I þexcuse þough þou schalt be spilt
 Allas quod sche god wot I haue no gilt 1612
 Pay me quod he. or by þe swet seint Anne
 As I wol bere away þy newe panne
 For dette which þou owest me of old [leaf 107, back]
 whan þat þou madest þin housbond cokewold 1616

I payd at hom for þi correccioun
 Thou lixt quod sche by my sauacioun
 Ne was I neuer er now wydow ne wyf
 Somound vnto 3our court/ in al my lyf 1620
 Ne neuer I was but of my body trewe
 vnto þe deuel rough and blak of hiewe
 3iue I þy body and þe panne also
 And whan þe deuyll herd hir curse so 1624
 vpon his knees he sayd in þis manere
 Now mabely myn owne modir deere
 Is þis 3our wil in ernest þat/ 3e seye
 þe deuel quod he fecche him er he deye 1628
 And panne and al but he wol him repente
 Nay olde stot þat is not/ myn entente /
 Quod þis sompnour to repente me
 For eny þing þat I haue had of þe 1632
 I wold I had þy smok and euery cloth
 Now broþir quod þe deuyll be not wroþ
 Thy body and þis panne is myn by right
 Thou schalt wiþ me to helle 3it to night 1636
 wher þou schalt knowen of our priuete
 More þan a maister of diuinite
 And wiþ þat word þe foule fend him hente
 Body and soule he wiþ þe deuyll wente 1640
 wher as þe sompnours han her heritage
 And god þat maked after his ymage
 Mankynde saue and gyde vs alle and some
 And leene þis sompnour good man to bycome 1644
 lordyngs I couþ han. told 3ow quod þe frere
 had I had leysir for þis sompnour here
 After þe text of crist powel and Ion
 And of oper doctours many oon 1648
 Such peynes þat our herte might agrise
 Al be it so no tonge may deuyse /
 Though þat I might a þousand wynter telle
 The peyn of pilke cursed hous of helle 1652

But^t for to kepe vs fro þat^t cursed place [leaf 108]
 wakip^þ and prayeth iħu for his grace
 So kepe vs fro þe temptour Sathanas
 herknith þis word. beþ war as in þis cas 1656
 The lyoun syt^t in his awayt^t alway
 To slen þe Innocent^t if^t þat^t he may
 Disposith 3oure hertes to wipstonde
 The fend þat^t wolde make 3ow þral and bonde / 1660
 He may not^t tempte 3ow ouer 3our might^t
 For crist^t wol be 3our champioun and knight^t
 And prayeth þat^t oure sompnour him repente
 Of^t his mys dede. er þat^t þe fend him hente. 1664

¶ Here endith þe frere his tale

[No break in the MS.]

¶ And here begynneth þe sompnour his prologe

This sompnour in his styrop vp he stood
 vpon þe Frere his herte was so wood
 That lyk an aspen leef/ he quok for Ire
 lordyngs quod he. but oon þing I desire 1668
 I 3ow biseke þat of 3our curtesye
 Syn 3e han herd þis false frere lye
 As suffrith me I may my tale telle
 This frere bosteth þat he knowith helle 1672
 And god it wot. þat is litil wonder
 Freres and feendes been but litel asonder
 For pardy 3e han often tyme herd telle /
 how þat a frere rauyscht was to helle 1676
 In spirit ones by a visioun
 And as an aungel. lad him vp and down
 To schewen him þe peynes þat þer were
 In al þe place saugh he not a frere 1680
 Of oper folk he saugh ynowe in wo
 vnto þis aungel spak þis frere þo
 Now sire quod he han freres such a grace
 That noon of hem schal comen in þis place 1684
 3is quod þis aungil many a mylioun
 And vnto Sathanas he lad him down
 And now hap sathanas saith he a tayl
 Broder þan of a Carrik is þe sayl 1688
 hold vp þy tayl þou Sathanas quod he [leaf 108, back]
 Schew forth þyn ars and let þe frere se
 wher is þe nest of freres in þis place
 And er þan half a forlong way of space 1692

Right ^t so as bees swarmen out ^t of ^t an hyue	
Out ^t of þe deueles ers þay gonne dryue	
Twenty þousand freres on a route	
And þorough out ^t helle swarmed al aboute	1696
And comen as fast ^t as þay may goon	
And in his ers þay crepen euerich oon ·	
he clappid his tayl agayn and lay ful stille	
This frere whan he loked had his fille	1700
Vpon þe torment ^t of ^t þis sory place	
his spirit ^t god restored of ^t his grace	
vnto his body agayn and he awook ^t	
But ^t napeles for fere ȝit ^t he quook ^t	1704
So was þe deueles ers ȝit in his mynde	
That ^t is his heritage of ^t verray kynde/	
God saue ȝow alle saue þis cursed frere	
My proloug ^t wol I ende in þis manere	1708

[No break in the MS.]

¶ Narrat

LOrdynys þer is . in Engelond I gesse
 A mersschly lond called holdernesse
 In which þer went a lymytour aboute
 To preche and eek to begge it is no doubte 1712
 And so bifel it . on a day þis frere
 had preched at a chirch in his manere
 And specially abouen euery þing
 Excited he þe poepul in his preching 1716
 To trentals and to ȝiue for goddis sake
 wher that men mighten holy soules make
 Ther as diuine seruys is honoured
 Nought þer as it is wasted and deuoured 1720
 Neither it needeþ not for to be ȝiue
 As to possessioneres þat mow lyue
 Thanked be god in wele and abundaunce
 Trentals sayd he delyuereth fro penaunce 1724
 her frendes soules as wel eld as ȝonge
 ȝe whanne þat þay hastily ben songe
 Nought for to hold a prest iolif and gay [leaf 109]
 he syngith not but oon masse in a day 1728
 Delyuerith out quod he þe soules
 Ful hard it is wiþ fleischhok or with oules
 To ben y-clawed . or brend or I-bake
 Now speed ȝow hastily for cristes sake 1732
 And whan þis frere had sayd al his entent
 with Qui cum patre . forþ he went
 whan folk in chirch had ȝiue him what hem lest
 he went his way no lenger wold he rest 1736

with scrip and pyked staf y-touked hye
 In euery hous and gan to pore and pry
 And beggyd mele or chese or ellis corn
 his felaw had a staf typped with horn 1740
 A payr of tablis al of yuory
 And a poyntel y-polischet fetisly
 And wroot þe names alway as he stood
 Of alle folk that ȝaf him eny good 1744
 Ascaunce þat he wolde for hem preye
 ȝif vs a busschel. whet or malt or reye
 A goddes kichil or a trip of chese
 Or elles what ȝow list we may not chese 1748
 A goddes halpeny or a masse peny
 Or ȝif vs of ȝoure braune if ȝe haue eny
 A dagoun of ȝour blanket leue dame
 Oure suster deer. lo her I write ȝour name 1752
 Bacoun or beef or such þing as we fynde
 A stourdy harlot ay went hem by hynde
 That was her hostis man and bar a sakt
 And what men ȝaf hem layd it on his bakt 1756
 And whan þat he was out atte dore anoon
 he planed out þe names euerychoon
 That he biforn had writen in his tablis
 He serued hem wiþ nyfles and wiþ fablis 1760
 Nay þer þou lixt þou sompnour sayd þe frere
 Pees quod our host for cristes moder deere
 Tel forþ þy tale and spare it not at al
 So thriue I quod þe sompnour so I schal 1764
 So long he wente hous by hous til he [leaf 109, back]
 Cam til an hous þer he was wont to be
 Refresshid mor þan in an hundrid placis.
 Syk lay þe housbond man whos þat þe place is. 1768
 Bedred vpon a couche lowe he lay
 Deus hic quod he O thomas frend good day
 Sayde þis frere al curteysly and softe /
 O. Thomas god ȝeld it ȝow ful ofte 1772

haue I vpon þis bench I-fare ful wel
 her haue I eten many a mery mel
 And fro þe bench he drof away þe cat
 And layd a-doun his potent and his hat 1776
 And eek his scrip and set him soft a-doun
 his felaw was go walkid in þe toun
 Forth with his knaue to þe ostelrye /
 wher as he schop him þilke night to lye 1780
 O deere maister quod þe seeke man
 how haue ȝe fare siþþe march bygan
 I saygh ȝow nouȝt þis fourtenight or more
 God wot quod he labord haue I ful sore 1784
 And specially for þy saluacioun
 haue I sayd many a precious orisoun
 And for myn oþer frendes god hem blesse /
 I haue to day ben at your chirche at messe 1788
 And sayd a sermoun after my simple wit
 Nought al after þe text of holy wryt
 For it is hard for ȝow as I suppose
 And þerfor wil I teche ȝow ay þe glose 1792
 Glosyng is a ful glorious þing certayn
 For letter slep so as we clerkes sayn
 þer haue I taught hem to be chariteable
 And spend her good. þer it is resonable 1796
 And þer I seigh our dame wher is sche /
 ȝond in þe ȝerd I trowe þat sche be
 Sayde þis man. and sche wil come anon
 ¶ Ey mayster welcome be ȝe by seint Iohn 1800
 Sayde þis wyf how fare ȝe hertily
 þe frere ariseþ vp ful curteysly
 And hir embracith in his armes narwe [leaf 110
 And kist hir swete. and chirkeþ as a sparwe 1804
 with his lippes dame quod he right wel.
 As he þat is ȝour seruauunt euery del
 Thankyd be god þat ȝow ȝaf soule and lif
 ȝit saugh I not þis day so fair a wyf 1808

In al þe chirche god so saue me .
 3e God amend defautes sir quod sche /
 Algates welcome be 3e by my fay
 Graunt^t mercy dame þis haue I found alway 1812
 But^t of^t 3our grete goodnes by 3oure leue
 I wolde pray 3ow þat^t 3e 3ow not^t greene
 I wil wip Thomas speke a litel þrowe
 These curates ben ful negligent^t and slowe 1816
 To grope tendurly a conscience
 In schrift^t and preching^t is my diligence
 Study in petres wordes and in poules
 And walk^t and fische cristen mennes soules 1820
 To 3elde Ihu crist^t his propre rent
 To spreden his word is al myn entent
 Now by 3our leue o deere sire quod sche
 Chyd him right^t wel for seinte trinite 1824
 he is as angry as a pissemyre
 Though þat^t he haue al þat he can desire
 Though I him wrye on night^t and make him warm
 And ouer him lay my leg^t oþer myn arm 1828
 he groneth lik^t our boor that^t lith in sty .
 Othir disport^t of^t him right^t noon haue I
 I may please him in no maner caas .
 O Thomas Ieo vous dy Thomas Thomas . 1832
 This makþ þe feend . þis moste ben amendid
 Ire is a þing^t þat^t highe god defendid
 And þer of^t wold I speke a word or tuo
 Now maister quod þe wyf^t er þat^t I go / 1836
 what^t wil 3e dyne . I wil go þer aboute
 Now dame quod he Ieo vous dy saun3 doute
 haue I not^t of^t a capoun but^t þe lyuere
 And of^t 3our softe brede but^t a schiuere 1840
 And after þat^t a rostyð pigges heed [leaf 110, back]
 But^t þat^t I wold for me no best^t were deed .
 Than had I wip 3ow homly suffisaunce
 I am a man of^t litel sustinaunce 1844

My spirit haþ his fostryng^t on þe bible /
 þe body is ay so redy and penyble
 To wake þat^t my stomak^t is destroyed
 I pray 3ow dame þat^t 3e be not^t anoyed 1848
 For I so frendly 3ow my counseil schewe
 By I nold not^t telle it but^t a fewe /
 Now sir quod sche but^t o word er I go
 My child is deed wipinne þise wykes tuo 1852
 Soon after þat^t 3e went^t out^t of þis toun
 his deth saugh I by reuelacioun
 Sayde þis frere at^t hoom in oure dortour
 I dar wel sayn er þat^t half^t an hour 1856
 After his deth . I seigh him born to blisse
 In myn auysioun so god me wisse .
 So did our sextein . and our fermerere
 That^t han ben trewe freres many a 3ere 1860
 þay may now god be thanked of his lone
 Maken her Iubile . and walk^t alloone
 But^t vp I roos and al our couent^t eeke
 With many a teere trilling^t on my cheeke . 1864
 Te deum was our song^t and no þing^t ellis
 wipouten noys or clateryng^t of^t bellis
 Saue þat^t to crist^t I sayd an orisoun
 Thankyng^t him of^t my reuelacioun 1868
 For sire and dame trustith me right^t wel
 Our orisouns ben more effectuel
 And more we se of^t goddis secre þinges
 Than borel folk^t alough þat^t þay ben kinges 1872
 we lyue in pouert^t and in abstinence
 And borel folk^t in riches and dispence
 Of mete and drink^t and in her ful delyt
 we han al þis worldes delit^t in despyt^t 1876
 lazar and Diues lyueden diuersely
 And diuers guerdoun hadde þay þerby
 who-so wol praye . faste . and be clene . [leaf 111]
 And fatte his soule and make his body lene 1880

we faren as saith þapostil cloþ and foode
 Sufficeþ vs . þough þay ben not goode
 The clenness and þe fastyng^t of^t vs freres
 Makith þat^t crist^t acceptith oure prayeres 1884
 lo moyses fourty dayes and fourty night^t
 Fasted er þat^t þe highe god of^t might^t
 Spak^t wiþ him in . þe mount of^t Synay
 with empty wombe fastyng^t many a day 1888
 Receyued he þe lawe þat^t was writen
 with goddis fynger and holy wel 3e w
 In mount^t oreb or he had eny speche
 with highe god þat^t is oure lyues leche 1892
 He fastid and was in contemplacioun
 Aron þat^t had þe temple in gouernacioun
 And eek^t þe oþer prestes euerychoon
 In to þe temple whan þay schulden goon 1896
 To preye for þe poeple and doon seruise
 Thay nolden drinken . in no maner wise /
 No drynke which þat^t dronke might^t hem make /
 But^t þer in abstinence prey and wake 1900
 lest^t þat^t þay dedin . tak^t heed what^t I say
 But^t þay ben sobre þat^t for þe pepul pray
 war þat^t I say no mor . for it^t suffisith
 Oure lord Ihu as oure lore deuysith 1904
 3af^t vs ensampil of^t fastyng^t and prayeres
 þerfore we mendinaunt; we cely freres
 Ben wedded to pouert^t and to continence
 To charite . humblesse and abstinence 1908
 To persecucioun for rightwisnesse
 To wepyng^t misericord and clennesses
 And þerfor may 3e seen þat^t oure prayeres
 I speke of^t vs we mendeaunts . we freres 1912
 Ben to þe hihe god mor acceptable
 Than 3oures with 3our festis at^t 3our table
 Fro paradis first^t if^t I schal not^t lye
 was man out^t chaced for his glotonye 1916

And chast^t was man in paradis certeyn [leaf 111, back]
 But now herk/ thomas. what I schal þe seyn
 I ne haue no tixt^t of it as I suppose /
 But^t I schal fynd it in a maner glose / 1920
 That^t specially our swete lord ihc^t
 Spak^t þis by freres whan he sayde þus
 Blessed be þay þat^t pouer in spirit ben
 And so forþ in þe gospel ȝe may seen 1924
 wheþer it be likir oure professioun
 Or heris þat^t swymmen in possessioun
 Fy on her pomp and on her glotenye
 And on her lewydnesse I hem defye 1928
 Me þinkith þay ben lik^t Iouynian
 Fat^t as a whal and walken as a swan
 Al vinolent^t as botel in þe spence
 her prayer is of ful gret^t reuerence 1932
 whan þay for soules sayn þe psalm of dauid
 lo boef^t þay say. Cor meum eructauit
 who folwith cristes gospel and his fore
 But^t we þat^t humble ben and chast^t and pore 1936
 werkers of goddes word and auditours
 Ther-for right^t as an hauk^t vpon a sours
 vpspringeth in to þaer right^t so prayeres
 Of charitabil and chaste busy freres 1940
 Maken her sours to goddis eeres tuo
 Thomas thomas so mote I ryde or go
 And by þat^t lord þat^t clepid is seint^t Iue
 Ner þou oure broþer schuldestow neuer þriue 1944
 In oure chapitre pray we day and night^t
 To crist^t þat^t he þe sende hele and might^t
 Thy body for to welden hastily
 God wot^t quod he þer-of^t nought^t feelee I. 1948
 As help me crist^t as I in fewe ȝeeres
 haue spendid vpon many diuers freres
 Ful many a pound ȝit^t fare I neuer þe bet^t
 Certeyn my good haue I almost^t byset/ 1952

Far wel my gold for it ^t is almost a go	
The frere answerd // O thomas dostow so	
what ^t needith 3ow dyuerse freres seche	[leaf 112]
what ^t needith him þat ^t haþ a parfyt ^t leche /	1956
To sechen opir leches in þe toun	
3oure inconstance is 3oure confusioun	
holde 3e þan me or oure couent	
To praye for 3ow insufficient	1960
Thomas þat ^t iape is not ^t worth a myte	
3oure malady is for we haue to lite	
¶ A 3iue þat ^t couent ^t half ^t a quarter otes	
A 3iue þat ^t couent ^t four and twenty grotes	1964
A 3iue þat ^t frere a peny and let ^t him go .	
Nay nay thomas . it ^t may nought ^t be so	
what ^t is a ferthing worth depart ^t in tuelue	
lo ech þing ^t þat ^t is ooned in himselue	1968
Is more strong ^t þan whan it ^t is to-skatrid	
Thomas of ^t me þou schalt ^t not ^t ben y-flatrid	
Thow woldist ^t haue our labour al for nought	
The hihe god þat ^t al this world hath wrought ^t	1972
Saith þat ^t a werkman is worþy his hyre	
Thomas nouȝt ^t of ^t 3our tresor I desire	
For my self ^t . but ^t for that ^t oure couent/	
To pray for 3ow is ay so diligent	1976
And for to buylden cristes holy chirche	
Thomas if ^t 3e wil lerne for to wirche /	
Of ^t buyldyng ^t vp on chirches may 3e fynde	
If ^t it be good in thomas lyf ^t of ^t ynde	1980
3e lye her ful . of ^t anger and of ^t Ire	
wiþ which þe deuel set ^t 3our hert ^t on fuyre	
And chyden her þe holy Innocent ^t	
3our wyf ^t þat ^t is . so meke and pacient /	1984
And þerfor trow me thomas if ^t þou list ^t	
Ne stryue nouȝt ^t wiþ þy wiif ^t as for þi best ^t	
And ber þis word away now by þy faith	
Touchinge such þing ^t lo þe wise man saith	1988

¶ wipinne þin hous be þou no lyoun
 To þy subiects . do noon oppressioun
 Ne make þyn acqueyntis fro þe fle
 And ȝit^t thomas eftsons I charge þe / 1992
 Be war for hir þat^t in þy bosom slepith [leaf 112, back]
 war for þe serpent þat^t so priuely crepith
 vnder þe gras and styngith priuely
 Be war my sone and werk^t paciently 1996
 For twenty þousend men han lost^t her lyues
 For stryuyng^t wip her lemmans and her wyues .
 Now syns ȝe han so holy and meeke a wif^t
 what^t nedith ȝow thomas to make strif^t 2000
 Ther nys I-wis no serpent^t so cruel
 when men trede on his tail ne half^t so fel
 As womman is when sche hap caught^t an Ire
 Vengeans is þanne . al þat^t þay desire 2004
 Schortly may no man by rym and vers [Spurious] 2004b
 Tellen her thoughtes þay ben so dyuers [„] 2004c
 Ire is a þing^t oon þe grete of^t seuene
 Abhominable to þe god of^t heuene
 And to himself^t it is destruccioun
 This euery lewed vicory or parsoun 2008
 Can say how Ire engendrith homicide
 Ire is in soth executour of^t pride
 I couþe of^t Ire seyn so moche sorwe
 My tale schulde laste til to morwe 2012
 Ire is þe grate of^t synne as saith þe wise [Spurious] 2012b
 To fle þer fro ech man schuld him deuyse [„] 2012c
 And þer-for pray I god boþe day and night^t
 An Irous man god send him litil might^t
 It is greet^t harm . and also gret^t pite
 To set^t an Irous man in high degre 2016
 ¶ whilom þer was an Irous potestate
 As seith senek^t þat^t duryng^t his estaat^t /
 vpon a day out/ riden knightes tuo
 And as fortune wolde right^t as it^t were so 2020
 That^t oon of^t hem cam home þat^t oper nouȝt^t
 Anoon þe knight^t bifore the iuge is brouȝt^t
 That^t sayde þus . þou hast^t þy felaw slayn
 For which I deme þe to deth certayn 2024

And to anothir knight comaundid he /
 Go lede him to þe deth I charge þe /
 And happed as þay wente by þe weye [leaf 113]
 Toward þe place þer he schulde deye 2028
 The knight com which . men wend hadde be deed
 Than þoughten þay it were þe beste reed
 To lede hem boþe to þe iuge agayn
 Thay sayden lord þe knight haþ not slayn 2032
 his felaw lo . heer he stont hool on lyue
 3e schal be deed quod he so mote I priue
 That is to sayn boþe oon . tuo . and þre
 And to þe firste knyzt right þus spak he 2036
 I deme þe þou most algate be deed
 Than þoughte þay it were þe beste rede [Spurious] 2037b
 To lede him forþ in to a fair mede [„] 2037c
 And quod þe iuge also þou most lese þin heed
 For þou art cause why þy felaw deyth
 And to þe þridde felaw þus he seith 2040
 Thou hast nought doon þat I comaundid þe
 And þus he let don sle hem alle þre
 Irous Cambises was eek dronkelewe
 And ay delited him to ben a schrewe 2044
 And so bifel a lord of his meigne
 That loued vertues and eek / moralite
 Sayd on a day bitwix hem tuo right þus
 A lord is lost if he be vicious 2048
 An Irous man is lik a frentik best [Spurious] 2048b
 In which þer is of wisdom noon arrest [„] 2048c
 And dronkenes is eek a foul record
 Of any man and namly of a lord
 Ther is ful many ey3e and many an eere
 Awaytand on a lord and he not where 2052
 For goddes loue drynk more attemperelly
 wyn makith man to lese wrecchedly
 his mynde and eek . his lymes euerichoon
 The reuers schaltow seen quod he anoon 2056
 And proue it by þin owne experience
 That wyn ne doþ to folk non such offence
 Ther is no wyn . byreueth me my wit
 Of hond of foot ne of myn ey3e sight 2060

And for despyt^t he dronke moche more [leaf 113, back]
 An hundrid part^t þan he had doon byfore
 And right^t anoon þis irous cursid wrecche /
 Let^t þis knightes sone anoon biforn him fecche 2064
 Comaundyng^t hem þay schuld biforn him stonde
 And sodeinly he took^t his bowe on honde
 And vp þe streng^t he pulled to his eere
 And wiþ an arwe he slough þe child right^t þere 2068
 Now wheþir haue I a sikur hond or noon
 Quod he is al my mynde and might^t agoon
 hath wyn byreuyd me myn eye sight^t
 what^t schuld I telle þe answer of^t þe knight 2072
 his sone was slayn þer is no more to say
 Be war þerfor. wiþ lordes how 3e play
 Syngith placebo. and I schal if^t I can
 But^t if^t it^t be. vnto a pore man 2076
 To a pore man men schuld his vices telle
 But^t not^t to a lord þey he schuld go to helle
 lo Irous Cirus þilke Percien
 how he destroyed þe ryuer of^t Gysen 2080
 For þat^t an hors of^t his was dreynt þer Inne.
 whan þat^t he wente Babiloyne to wynne
 he made þat^t þe ryuer was so smal
 þat^t wommen mighte wade it ouer al 2084
 lo what^t sayde he þat^t so wel teche can
 Ne be no felaw. to an irous man
 Ne with no wood man walke by þe way
 lest^t þe repent I wol no lenger say 2088
 Now thomas leue broþer leue þin Ire
 Thow schalt^t me fynde as iust^t as is a squire
 Thyn anger doth þe al to sore smerte
 hald not^t þe deueles knyft alway at^t þyn herte 2092
 But^t schewe to me al þy confessioun
 Nay quod þis syke man by seynt symoun
 I haue ben schriuen þis day of^t my curate
 I haue him told holly al myn estate/ 2096

Nedith no more to speken of it saith he /
 But if me list of myn humilite .
 3if me þan of þy good to make our cloyster [leaf 114]
 Quod he for many a muscle and many an oyster 2100
 hap ben oure foode our Cloyster to arreyse
 whan oþer men han ben ful wel at eyse
 And 3if god wot vnnethe þe foundement
 Parformed is ne of oure pauyment 2104
 Is noughȝt a tyle 3if wipinne our wones
 By god we owe 3if fourty pound for stones
 Now help Thomas for him þat harewed helle
 Or elles moote we oure bookes selle 2108
 And 3if 3ow lakke oure predicacioun
 Thanne goþ þe world al to destruccioun
 For who-so wold vs fro þe world byreue
 So god me saue Thomas by 3oure leue 2112
 he wolde byreue out of þis world þe sonne
 For who can teche . and werken as we conne
 And þis is not of litel tyme quod he
 But sippen Elye was her or ele 2116
 han freres ben fynde I of record
 In charite I þanked be oure lord
 Now Thomas help for seynte charite
 A-doun he sette him anon on his kne 2120
 This sike man wex welneigh wood for Ire
 he wolde þat þe frere had ben on fuyre
 with his fals dissimulacioun
 Such þing as is in my possessioun 2124
 Quod he þat may I 3eue 3ow and noon oþer
 3e sayn me þus how þat I am 3our broþer
 3e certes quod þe frere trusteth wel
 I took our dame þe letter vnder oure sel 2128
 Now wel quod he and som what schal I 3iue
 Vnto 3our holy couent whils þat I lyue
 And in þyn hond þou schalt it haue anon
 On þis condicioun and oþer noon 2132

That þou depart it so my deere broþer
 That euery frere haue as moche as oþer
 Thy schaltow swere on þy professioun
 wiþouten fraude or cauillacioun 2136
 I swere it quod þis frere vpon my faith [leaf 114, back]
 And þer-with his hond in his he laith
 lo her myn hond in me schal be no lak
 Now þanne put þyn hond down at my bak 2140
 Sayde þis man and grope wel byhynde
 Bynethe my buttok þere schaltow fynde
 A þing þat I haue hud in priuete
 A þought þis frere þat schal go with me / 2144
 And down his hond he launched to þe clifte
 In hope for to fynde þer a zifte
 And whan þis syke man felte þis frere
 Aboute his tuel grope þer and heere 2148
 Amyd his hond he leet þe freere a fart
 Ther is no capul drawyng in a cart
 That might haue let a fart of such a soun
 The frere vpstart as doth a wood lyoun 2152
 A false cherl quod he for goddes bones
 This hastow in despit don for þe noones
 Thou schalt abyge þis fart if þat I may
 his meyne which þat herd of þis affray 2156
 Com leþand In and chased out þe frere
 And forth he goþ wiþ a foul angry cheere
 And fat his felaw þere lay his stoor
 he lokid as it were a wylde boor 2160
 And grynte with his teep so was he wroth
 A stordy paas down to þe court he goth
 wher as þer wonyd a man of gret honour
 To whom þat he was alway confessour 2164
 This worþy man was lord of þat / village
 This frere com as he were in a rage
 wher þat þis lord sat etyng at his bord
 Vnneþe might þe frere speke a word 2168

Til atte last^t he sayde god 3ow se
 This lord gan loke and sayde benedicite
 What^t frere Iohn what^t maner world is þis /
 I se wel. þat^t som þing^t is amys 2172
 3e loke as þough þe woode were ful of^t þeys
 Sit^t down anoon and tel me what^t 3our gref^t is
 And it^t schal ben amendit if^t þat^t I may [leaf 115]
 I haue quod he had a despit^t to day 2176
 God 3elde 3ow a-down in 3oure vilage
 That^t in þis world is noon so pore a page/
 That^t he nold haue abhominacioun
 Of^t þat^t I haue receyued in 3oure toun 2180
 And 3et ne greuith me no þing^t so sore
 As þat^t þis elde cherl wiþ lokkes hore
 Blasphemed haþ our holy couent^t eeke
 Now maister quod þis lord I 3ow biseke 2184
 No maister sir quod he but seruitour
 Þough I haue had in scole such honour
 God likith not^t þat Raby men vs calle
 Neither in market neyther in 3our large halle 2188
 No fors quod he tellith me al 3our greef
 Þis frere sayd sire an odious meschief^t
 This day bytid is to myn ordre and to me
 And so þar consequens to ech degre 2192
 Of^t holy chirche god amend it soone
 Sir quod þe lord 3e wot^t what^t is to doone
 Distempre 3ow nought^t 3e ben my confessour
 3e ben þe salt^t of^t þerþe and sauyour 2196
 For goddes loue 3oure pacience 3e holde
 Tel me 3our greef^t and he anoon him tolde
 As 3e han herd bfore 3e wot^t wel what^t
 The lady of^t þat^t hous ay stille sat^t 2200
 Til sche had herd what^t þe frere sayde
 Ey goddes moodir quod she blisful mayde
 Is þer ought^t elles tel me faithfully
 Ma dame quod he how þynke 3ow þerby 2204

how þat me þynkith quod sche so god me speede
 I say a cherl hap doon a cherles deede
 what' schuld I say god let' him neuer þe
 His syke heed is full of' vanyte 2208
 I hold him in a maner frenesye /
 Ma dame quod he I-wis I schal not' lye
 But' I in opir wise may be wreke
 I schal defame him ouer al wher I speke 2212
 The false blasfememour þat' chargid me [leaf 115, back]
 To parten þat' wil not departed be
 To euery man yliche wiþ meschaunce
 The lord sat' stille as he were in a traunce 2216
 And in his hert' he rollid vp and down
 How had þis cherl ymaginacioun
 So schewe such a probleme to þe frere
 Neuer eft' er now herd I of' such matiere 2220
 I trowe þe deuel put' it in his mynde
 In ars metrik / schal þer no man fynde
 Biforn þis day of' such a questioun
 who schulde make a demonstracioun 2224
 That' euery man schuld haue a lyk' his part'
 As of' a soun or of' a sauour of' a fart'
 O nyce proude cherl I schrew his face
 lo sires quod þe lord wiþ harde grace 2228
 who euer herde of' such a þing' er now
 To euery man y-like tel me how
 It is impossible it may not' be
 Ey nyce cherl god let' him neuer þe 2232
 The romblyng' of a fart' and euery soun
 Nis but' an aier reuerberacioun
 And euer it' wastith lyte and lyt' away
 Ther nys no man can deme by my fay / 2236
 If' þat' it' were departed equally
 what' lo my cherl what' lo how schrewedly
 vnto my confessour to day he spak'
 I hold him certeinly demoniak' 2240

Now etith 3our mete and let þe cherl go play /
 Let him go honge himself on deuel way /

[*The Solution of the "Probleme" by the Lord's Squire.*
No break in the MS.]

Now stood þe lordes squier at þe bord
 That carf his mete and herde word by word 2244
 Of al þis þing which þat I of haue sayd
 My lord quod he be 3e nou3t euel payd
 I couþe telle for a gowne cloth
 To 3ow sir frere so þat 3e be not wroth 2248
 How þat þis fart euen / departed schuld be
 Among 3our couent if I comaunded be
 Tel quod þe lord and þou schalt haue anon [leaf 116]
 A goune cloþ by god and by seint Iohn 2252
 My lord quod he whan þat þe wedir is fair
 wiþoute wynd or pertourbyng of ayr
 let bring a large whel in to þis halle
 But þat it haue his spokes alle 2256
 Twelf spokes hath a cart whel comunly
 And bring me . xij . freres wit 3e why
 For þrettene is a couent as I gesse /
 3our noble confessour her god him blesse 2260
 Schal parfourn vp þe nombre of þis couent
 Thanne schal þay knele down by oon assent
 And to euery spokes ende in þis manere
 Ful sadly lay his nose schal a frere 2264
 3our noble confessour þer god him saue
 Schal hold his nose vpright vnder þe naue
 Than schal þis churl with bely stif and tough
 As eny tabor hider ben y-brought 2268
 And sette him on þe whele of þis cart
 vpon þe naue and make him lete a fart
 And 3e schul seen vp peril of my lif
 By verray proef þat is demonstratif 2272

That equally þe soun of it wol wende /
 And eek þe stynk vnto þe spokes ende
 Saue þat þis worþy man ȝour confessour
 By cause he is a man of gret honour 2276
 Schal haue þe firste fruyt as resoun is
 The noble vsage of freres is þis
 The worthy men of hem first schal be serued
 As certeynly he haþ it wel deserued 2280
 he hath to day taught vs so mochil good
 with preching in þe pulpit þer he stood
 That I may vouche sauf I say for me
 He hadde þe firste smel of fartes þre 2284
 And so wold al his couent hardily
 he berith him so fair and holily
 The lord þe lady and ech man sauf þe frere
 Sayde þan Iankyn spak in þis matiere 2288
 As wel as euclide or elles protholome [leaf 116, back]
 Touchand þe clerk þay sayd þat subtilte
 An high wyt made him speken as he spak
 he nas no fool ne no demoniak / 2292
 And Iankyn haþ I-wonne a newe goune
 My tale is don. we ben almost at toune.
 ¶ Here endith the sompnours tale

[No break in the MS.]

GROUP E. FRAGMENT VI.

§ 1. THE CLERK'S HEAD-LINK.

HARLEIAN MS. 7334 (British Museum).

¶ And here bygynneth þe Clerk of Oxenford prologe
 Ir clerk of Oxenford our hoste sayde
 3e ryde as stille and coy as doþ a mayde /
 were newe spoused sittynge at a bord
 This day ne herd I of 3our mouth a word 4
 I trowe 3e study aboute som sophime
 But Salomon saith every þing hath tyme
 For goddis sake as beth of better cheere
 It is no tyme for to stody hiere 8
 Tel vs som mery tale by 3our fay
 For what man is entred vnto play
 he moot nedes vnto þat play assent
 But prechith not as freres doon in lent 12
 To make vs for our olde synnes wepe
 Ne þat þy tale [¹] tale make vs for to slepe ^{1 by scratcht out}
 Tel vs som mery þing of aduentures
 3oure termes 3our colours and 3our figures 16
 keep hem in stoor til so be þat 3e endite
 high style as whan þat men to kynges write
 Spekith so playn at þis tyme we 3ow pray
 That we may vnderstonde þat 3e say / 20
 This worpy clerk benignely answerde /
 Sir host quod he I am vnder 3our 3erde
 3e haue of vs as now þe gouernaunce /
 And þerfor wol I do 3ow obeissaunce 24

Als fer as resoun askith hardily
 I wil ȝow telle a tale which þat I
 lerned at Padowe of a worpy clerk
 As prouyd by his wordes and his werk 28
 he is now deed and nayled in his chest
 Now god ȝiue his soule wel good rest
 Fraunces petrark þe laureat poete [leaf 117]
 highte þis clerk/. whos rethorique swete 32
 Enlummynd al ytail of poetrie
 As linian did of philosophie
 Or lawue or other art particulere
 But deth þat wol not suffre vs duellen heere 36
 But as it were a twyncling of an ye
 hem bope haþ slayn and alle schul dye
 But forth to telle of this worpy man
 That taughte me þis tale as I first bigan 40
 I say þat he first with heigh stile enditith
 Er he þe body of his tale writith
 A proheme in the which descriuith he
 The mounde and of Saluces þe contre 44
 And spekith of appenyne þe hulles hye
 That ben þe boundes of al west lombardye
 And of mount vesulus in special
 wher as þe poo out of a welle smal 48
 Takith his firste springyng and his sours
 That estward ay encreseeth in his cours
 To Emyl-ward to ferard and to venise
 The which a long ping were to deuyse 52
 And trewely as to my Iuggement
 Me thinkith it a ping Impertinent
 Saue þat he wold conueyen his matiere
 But þis is þe tale which þat ȝe schuln heere 56

¶ Explicit prohemium

[No break in the MS. here, or between the Stanzas following.]

¶ Incipit narrare

- T**her is at þe west / ende of ytaile 57
 Doun at þe root of vesulus þe colde
 A lusty playn abundaunt of vitaile
 wher many a tour and toun þou maist byholde.
 That foundid were in tyme of fadres olde. 61
 And many anothir delitable sight
 And Saluces þis noble contray hight 63
- A marquys whilom duellid in þat lond 64
 As were his worpy eldris him bifore
 And obeisaunt ay redy to his hond
 were alle his liegis bothe lesse and more [leaf 117, back]
 Thus in delyt he lyueth and hath don ȝore 68
 Biloued and drad þurgh fauour and fortune
 Boþe of his lordes and of his comune 70
- Ther with he was as to speke of lynage 71
 The gentileste born of lumbardye
 A fair persone. and strong and ȝong of age
 And ful of honour and of curtesie
 Discret ynough his contre for to gye 75
 Sauynge in som þing he was to blame
 And wautier was þis ȝonge lordes name 77
- I blame him thus that he considered nought 78
 In tyme comyng what mighte bityde
 But on his lust present was al his þought
 As for to hauke and hunte on euery syde
 wel neigh al opir cures let he slyde 82
 And eek he nolde þat was [1] þe worst of al ^{1 þe was erased}
 wedde no wyf for no þing þat might bifal 84

Only þat poynt^t his poeple bar so sore 85
 That^t flokme^l on a day to him þay went^t
 And oon of^t hem that^t wisest^t was of^t lore
 Or elles þat^t þe lord wolde best^t assent
 That^t he schuld telle him what^t his poeple ment^t 89
 Or ellis couþe he schewe wel such matiere
 he to þe marquys sayd as 3e schuln hiere 91

O noble marquys. 3oure humanite 92
 Assureth vs and 3iueth vs hardynesse
 As ofte as tyme is of^t necessite
 That we to 3ow may telle oure heuynesse
 Acceptith lord now. of^t 3our necessite 96
 That we with pitous hert^t vnto 3ow playne
 And let^t 3oure eeris my vois not^t disdeyne 98

And haue I nought^t to doon in þis matere 99
 More þan anoþer man hap in þis place /
 3it for as moche as 3e my lord so deere
 han alway schewed me fauour and grace
 I dar þe better ask^t of^t 3ow a space / 103
 And audience to asken oure request/
 And 3e my lord to doon right^t as 3ow lest^t [leaf 118] 105

For certes lord so wel vs likith 3ow 106
 And al 3our werk^t and euer han doon þat^t we
 Ne couþen not^t deuysen how
 we mighte lyue more in felice
 Saue oon þing^t lord if^t þat^t 3our wille be 110
 That^t for to be a weddid man 3ow list/
 Than were 3our peple in souereign hertes rest / 112

Bowith 3our neck^t. vnder þat^t blisful 3ok^t 113
 Of^t souereignete. nought^t of^t seruise
 which þat^t men clepe spousail or wedlok^t
 And thenkith lord among^t 3our þoughtes wise /

how þat' our dayes passe in sondry wyse 117
 For þough we slepe or wake or rome aboute
 Ay fleth þe tyme it' wil no man abyde. 119

And though þour grene þouþe floure as þit 120
 In crepith age alway as stille as stoon
 And deth manasith euery age and smyt'
 In ech estat' for þer ascapith noon
 And as certeyn as as we knowe euerychon 124
 That' we schuln deye as vncerteyn we alle
 Ben of' þat' day þat' deþ schal on vs falle 126

Acceptith thanne of' vs þe trewe entent 127
 That neuer þit/ refusid þoure hest'
 And we wil lord if' þat' þe wil assent
 Chese þow a wyf' in schort' tyme atte lest
 Born of' þe gentilest' and þe heighest' 131
 Of' al þis lond so þat' it' oughte seme
 honour to god. and þow as we can deme 133

Deliuier vs out' of' al þis busy drede 134
 And tak' a wyf' fo hihe goddes sake /
 For if' it' so bifel as god forbede
 That' þurgh þour deþ þour lygnage schuld aslake
 And þat' a straunge successour schuld take 138
 þour heritage. O. wo were vs on lyue
 wherfor we pray þow hastily to wyue 140

Her meeke prayer. and her pitous chere 141
 Made þe marquys for to han pite
 þe wolde quod he. myn owne poeple deere [leaf 118, back]
 To þat' I neuer erst þought' constreigne me.
 I me reiioysid of' my liberte 145
 That' selden tyme is founde in mariage
 Ther I was fre I mot' ben in seruage 147

But natheles I se of 3ou þe trewe entent 148
 And trust vpon 3our witt and haue doon ay
 wherfor of my fre wil I wil assent/
 To wedde me as soon as euer I may
 But þer as 3e haue profred me to day 152
 To chese me a wyf I wol relese
 That choys and pray 3ow of þat/ profre cesse / 154

For god it woot þat childer ofte been 155
 vnlik her worthy eldris hem bifore
 Bounte comeþ al of god nought of þe streen
 Of which thay ben engendrid and I-bore
 I trust in goddis bounte and þerfore 159
 My mariage and myn estat and rest
 I him bytake . he may doon as him lest 161

Let me aloon . in chesyng of my wif 162
 That charge vpon my bak I wil endure
 But I 3ow pray and charge vpon 3our lyf
 That wyf þat I take 3e me assure /
 To worschip / whil . þat hir lif may endure 166
 In word and werk . bope heer and euery where /
 As sche an Emperoures doughter were 168

And forthermor þus schul 3e swer þat 3e 169
 A3eins my chois schuln neuer grucche ne stryue
 For sins I schal forgo my liberte
 At 3our request as euer mot I priue
 Ther as myn hert is set þer wil I wyue 173
 And but 3e wil assent in such manere
 I pray spek no more of þis matiere 175

With hertly wil . þay sworn and assentyn 176
 To al þis þing þer sayde no wight nay
 Bysechyng him of grace er þat þay wentyn
 That he wol graunten hem a certeyn day

Of his spousail as soone as euer he may 180
 For ȝit' alway þe peple som what' dredde [leaf 119]
 lest' that' the marquys wolde no wyf' wedde 182

He graunted hem a day such as him lest' 183
 On which he wolde be weddid sicurly
 And sayd he dede al þis at' her requeste
 And pay with humble hert' ful buxomly
 knelyng' vpon her knees ful reuerently 187
 him þanken alle and þus pay haue an ende
 Of her entent', and hom aȝein pay wende 189

And her vpon he to his officeris 190
 Comaundith for the feste to purueye
 And to his priue knightes and squyeres
 which charge ȝaf' as him list' on hem leye
 And thay to his comaundement' obeye / 194
 And ech of' hem doth his diligence
 To doon vnto þe feste reuerence 196

¶ Explicit prima pars.

[No more break in the MS.]

N Ought' fer fro pilke place honorable 197
 wher as this marquys schop his mariage
 Ther stood a thrope of' sighte delitable
 In which þat pore folk' of' þat' vilage
 hadden her bestes and her herburgage / 201
 And after her labour took' her sustienauunce
 After the erthe ȝaf' hem abundaunce 203
 Among' this pore folk' there duelt' a man 204
 which þat' was holden porest' of' hem alle
 But' heighe god som tyme sende can
 his grace vnto a litel oxe stalle
 Ianicula men of' þat' throop him calle / 208
 A doughter had he fair y-nough to sight'
 And Crisildes þis ȝonge doughter hight' 210

But for to speke of hir vertuous beaute	211
Than was sche oon þe fayrest vnder sonne	
For porely I-fostered vp was sche	
No licorous lust was in his body ronne	
wel ofter of þe welle þan of þe tonne	215
She dronk and for sche wolde vertu please	
Sche knew wel labour but noon ydel ease	217
But þough þis mayden tender were of age	[leaf 119, back] 218
3et in þe brest of her virginite	
Ther was enclosed rype and sad corrage	
And in gret reuerence and charite	
Hir olde pore fader fostred sche /	222
A fewe scheep spyunnyng on þe feld sche kept	
Sche nolde not ben ydel til sche slept	224
And whan sche com hom sche wolde brynge	225
wortis or oper herbis tymes ofte	
The which sche schred and seth for hir lyuynge	
And made hir bed ful hard and no þinge softe	
And ay sche kept hir fadres lif on lofte	229
with euery obeissance and diligence	
That child may do to fadres reuerence	231
Vpon Grisildes þe pore creature	232
Ful ofte sithes þis marquys set his ye	
As he on huntynge rood par aventure	
And whan it fel he mighte hir espye	
he not with wantoun lokynge of folye	236
his eyzen cast vpon hir but in sad wyse	
vpon hir cheer he wold him oft avise	238
Comendynge in his hert hir wommanhede	239
And eek hir vertu passynge any oper wight	
Of so yong age as wel in cheer as dede	
For þough þe poeple haue no gret insight	

In vertu he considereth aright 243
 Hir bounte and desposed þat he wolde
 wedde hir oonly if euer he wedde scholde 245

The day of weddyng cam but no wight can 246
 Telle what womman it schulde be /
 For which meruayle wondrith many a man
 And sayden whan þay were in priete
 wol nought our lord ȝit leue his vanite 250
 wol he not wedde allas allas þe while
 why wol he þus himself and vs bigyle 252

But natheles þis marquys hap doon make 253
 Of gemmes set in gold and in asure
 Broches and rynges for Grisildes sake /
 And of hir clothing took he þe mesure [leaf 120]
 By a mayde y-lik to hir of stature 257
 And eek of oþer ornamentes alle /
 That vnto such a weddyng schulde falle / 259

The tyme of vndern of þe same day 260
 Approchith þat þis weddyng schulde be /
 And al þe palys put was in array
 Boþe halle an chambur. ylik here degre
 houses of office stuffid with plente 264
 Ther maystow se of deynteuous vitayle
 That may be founde as fer as lastith Itaile / 266

This real marquys really arrayd 267
 lordes and ladyes in his compaignye
 he which vnto þe feste were prayed
 And of his retenu þe bachelerie
 with many a soun of sondry melodye 271
 vnto þe vilage of which I tolde
 In þis array þe right way han þay holde 273

- Grysild of þis god wot ful Innocent / 274
 That for hir schapen was al þis array /
 To fecche water at a welle is went /
 And cometh hom as soone as sche may
 For wel sche had herd sayd þat ilke day 278
 The marquys schulde wedde and if sche might
 Sche wold haue seyen som what of þat sight 280
- Sehe sayd I wol with oþer maydenes stonde / 281
 That ben my felawes. in oure dore and see /
 The marquys and þerfore wol I fonde /
 To don at hom as soone as it may be
 The labour which þat longeth vnto me 285
 And þanne may I at leysir hir byholde
 And sche þe way in to þe castel holde / 287
- And as sche wold ouer þe þreisshfold goon 288
 The marquys cam and gan hir for to calle
 And sche set down her water-pot anon
 Bisides þe þreischfold of þis oxe stalle /
 And doun vpon hir / knees. sche gan falle 292
 And with sad countenaunce knelith stille
 Til sche had herd what was þe lordes wille [leaf 120, back] 294
- This poughful marquys spak vnto þis mayde 295
 Ful soberly and sayd in þis manere
 wher is þour fader Grisildes he sayde
 And sche with reuerence and humble cheere
 Sayde lord he is al redy heere / 299
 And in sche goth wipouten lenger let
 And to þe marquys sche hir fader fet 301
- He by þe hond þan takith þis olde man 302
 And sayde þus. whan he him had on syde /
 Ianacula I neither may ne can
 lenger þe plesauns of myn herte hyde

If þat ȝe vouche sauft what so betyde / 306
 Thy doughter wil I take er þat I wende
 As for my wyf vnto hir lyues ende / 308

Thow louest me I wot it wel certeyn 309
 And art my faithful liege man I-bore /
 And al þat likith me I dar wel sayn
 It likith þe. and specially þefore
 Tel me þat poynt. as ȝe haue herd bifore 313
 If þat þow wolt vnto þat purpos drawe /
 To take me as for þy · sone in lawe 315

The sodeyn caas þe man astoneyd þo 316
 That reed he wax abaischt and al quakyng
 he stood vnneþe sayd he wordes mo
 But oonly þis. lord quod he my wilyng
 Is as ȝe wol aȝenst ȝoure likyng 320
 I wol no þing ȝe be my lord so deere
 Right as ȝow list gouernith þis matiere 322

Ȝit wol I quod þis markys softly 323
 That in þy chambre I and þou and sche /
 haue a collacioun and wostow why
 For I wol aske if it hir wille be
 To be my wyf and reule hir after me 327
 And al þis schal ben doon in þy presence
 I wol nought speke out of þyn audience 329

And in þe chamber whil þay were aboute 330
 her tretys which as ȝe schul after hiere
 The poeple cam vnto þe hous wiþoute [leaf 121]
 And wondrid hem in how honest manere
 And tendurly sche kept hir fader deere 334
 But outerly grisildes wonder might
 For neuer erst ne saugh sche such a sight 336

No wonder is þough þat sche were astoned 337
 To seen so gret a gest come in to þat place /
 Sche neuer was to suche gestes woned
 For which sche loked with ful pale face /
 But schortly þis matiere forth to chace 341
 These arn þe wordes þat þe marquys sayde /
 To this benigne verray faithful mayde 343

Grisylde he sayde 3e schul wel vnderstonde / 344
 It liketh to 3our fader and to me
 That I 3ow wedde and eek it may so stonde
 As I suppose 3e wil þat it so be /
 But þese demaundes aske I first quod he / 348
 That sith it schal be doon in hasty wyse
 wol 3e assent or elles 3ow auyse / 350

I say þis be 3e redy with good hert/ 351
 To al my lust and þat I frely may
 As me best liste. do 3ow laughe or smert
 And neuer 3e to gruch it night ne day
 And eek whan I say 3e 3e say not nay 355
 Neyther by word ne frownyng contenaunce
 Swer þis and here swer I oure alliaunce 357

Wondryng vpon þis word quakyng for drede 358
 Sche sayde lord vndigne and vnworthy
 I am to thilk honour. þat 3e me bede
 But as 3e wil 3our self right so wol I
 And here I swere þat neuer wityngly 362
 In werk ne thought I nyl 3ow disobeye
 For to be deed þough me were loth to deye 364

This is ynough Grisilde myn quod he / 365
 And forth goth he wiþ a ful sobre chere
 Out at þe dore and after þat cam sche
 And to þe pepul he sayd in þis manere ·

This is my wyf quod he þat stondith heere 369
 honoureth hir and loueth hir I 3ow pray [leaf 121, back]
 who so me loueth þer is no more to say 371

And for þat no þing of hir olde gere 372
 Sche schulde brynge vnto his hous he bad
 That wommen schuld despoilen hir right þere
 Of which þese ladyes were nought ful glad
 To handle hir clopes wher-in sche was clad 376
 But natheles þis mayde bright of hew
 Fro foot to heed þay schredde han al newe 378

Hir heeres han þay kempt þat lay vntressed 379
 Ful rudely and with hir fyngres smale
 A coroun on hir heed þay han I-dressed
 And set hir ful of nowches gret and smale
 Of hir array what schuld I make a tale / 383
 Vnnethe þe poeple hir knew for hir fairnesse /
 whan sche translated was in such richesse / 385

This marquis hap hir spoused with a ryng 386
 Brought for þe same cause and þan hir sette
 vpon an hors snow-whyte and wel amblyng
 And to his palys er he lenger lette
 with ioyful poeple þat hir ladde and mette 390
 Conueyed hire and þus þe day þay spende
 In reuel til þe sonne gan descende 392

And schortly þis tale for to chace 393
 I say þat to þis newe marquisesse
 God hath schewed fauour and sent hir of his grace
 That it semyd not by liklynesse
 That sche was born and fed in rudenesse 397
 As in a cote or in an Oxe stalle
 But norischt in an emperoures halle 399

To euery wight^t sche waxen is so deere 400
 And worschipful þat^t folk^t þer sche was born
 And from hir burthe knew hir ȝer by ȝere
 Vnneth trowed þay but^t dorst^t han sworn
 That^t to Ianicle of^t which I spak^t biforn 404
 Sche doughter were . for as by coniecture
 Hem þought^t sche was anoþer creature 406

For þough þat^t euer vertuous was sche 407
 Sche was encreased in such excellence [leaf 122]
 Of^t thewes goode i-set^t in high bounte
 And so discret and fair of eloquence
 So benigne and so digne of^t reuerence 411
 And couþe so þe poeples hert^t embrace
 That^t ech hir loueþ þat^t lokith in hir face 413

Nought^t onoly of^t Saluce in þe toun 414
 Puplicshed was þe bounte of^t hir name
 But^t eek^t byside in many a regioun
 If^t oon sayd wel anoþer sayd þe same
 So sprad of^t hire heigh bounte þe fame / 418
 That^t men and wommen as wel ȝong^t as olde
 Gon to Saluce vpon hir to byholde 420

This walter louly . nay but^t really 421
 weddid with fortunat^t honestete
 In goddes pees lyueth ful esily
 At^t home and outward grace ynough haþ he
 And for he saugh þat vnder low degre 425
 was ofte vertu y-hid þe poeple him helde
 A prudent^t man and þat^t is seint^t ful selde 427

Nought^t onoly þis Grisildes þurgh hit^t witte 428
 Couthe al þe feet^t of^t wify humblesse /
 But^t eek^t whan þat þe tyme required it^t
 The comun profyt^t couthe sche redresse

Ther nas discord rancour ne heuynesse /	432
In al þat' lond þat' sche ne coupe appese /	
And wisly bryngt hem alle in rest' and ese	434
Though þat' hir housbond absent' were anoon	435
If gentil men or oþer of hir contre	
were wroth sche wolde brynge hem at oon	
So wyse and rype wordes hadde sche	
And Iuggement' of so gret' equite	439
That' sche from heuen sent' was as men wende /	
Poeple to saue and euery wrongt to amende	441
Nought longe tyme after þat' þis Grisilde	442
was wedded sche a douȝter haþ I-bore	
Al had hir leuer han had a knaue childe	
Glad was þis marquis and þe folk' þerfore	
For though a mayden child come al byfore /	[U 122, bk] 446
Sche may vnto a knaue child atteigne	
By liklihed and sche nys not bareigne	448

[No break in the MS.]

¶ Incipit Tercia pars.

T her fel as fallith many tymes mo	449
whan þat' þis child haþ souked but' a þrowe	
This marquys in his herte longith so	
Tempte his wyf'. hir sadnesse for to knowe	
That' he ne might' out' of his herte þrowe	453
This meruaylous desir his wyf' tassaye	
Now god wot' he þought' hir to affraye	455
H e had assayed hir ynough bifore	456
And fond hir euer good what' needith it/	
hire to tempte. and alway more and more	
Though som men prayse it' for a subtil wit'	
But' as for me I say that' euel it' sit'	460
Tassay a wyf' whan þat' it is no neede	
And putte hir in anguyseh and in dreede	462

For which þis marquis wrouȝt in þis manere 463
 he com aloone a night þer as sche lay /
 wiþ sterne face and with ful trouble cheere
 And sayde þus Grisild quod he þat day /
 þat I ȝow took out of ȝour pore array / 467
 And putte ȝow in estat of heigh noblesse
 ȝe haue not þat. forgotten as I gesse / 469

I say Grisild þis present dignite 470
 In which þat I haue put ȝow as I trowe
 Makith ȝow not. forȝetful for to be
 þat I ȝow took in pore estat ful lowe
 For eny wele ȝe moot ȝour selue knowe / 474
 Tak heed of euery word þat/ I ȝow say /
 Ther is no wight þat herith it but we tway / 476

ȝe wot ȝour self. how ȝe comen heere 477
 In to þis hous it is nought long ago
 And þough to me þat ȝe be leef and deere
 vnto my gentils ȝe be no þing so
 Thay seyn to hem it is gret schame and wo 481
 For to ben subiect/. and ben in seruage /
 To the þat born art of a smal village [leaf 123] 483

And namely syn þy doughter was I-bore 484
 These wordes han þay spoken douteles
 But I desire as I haue doon byfore
 To lyue my lif with hem in rest and pees
 I may not in þis caas be reccheles 488
 I moot do with þy doughter for þe best/
 Not as I wolde but as my pepul lest 490

And ȝit god wot þis is ful loth to me 491
 But napeles wiþoute ȝoure witynge
 wol I not doon. but þis wold I quod he /
 That ȝe to me assent as in þis þing /

Schew now 3our paciens in 3our wirching^t 495
 þat^t þou me hightest^t and swor in 3on village
 That^t day þat^t maked was oure mariage 497

Whan sche had herd al þis sche nou3t^t ameeuyd 498
 Neyþer in word in cheer or countenaunce
 For as it^t semed sche was nought^t agreedeud
 She sayde lord al lith in 3our plesaunce
 My child and I with hertly obeisaunce 502
 Ben 3oures al . and 3e may saue or spille
 3our oughne þing^t . werkþ after 3our wille / 504

Ther may no þing^t so god my soule saue 505
 liken to 3ow þat^t may displesen me
 Ne I desire no þing^t for to haue
 Ne drede for to lese saue oonly 3e
 This wil is in myn hert^t and ay schal be 509
 No length of tyme or deþ may þis deface /
 Ne chaunge my corrage to oþer place / 511

Glad was this marquis of hir answeyng^t 512
 But^t 3it^t he feyned as he were not^t so
 Al dreery was his cheer and his loking^t
 whan þat^t he schold out^t of þe Chambre go
 Soon after þis a forlong^t way or tuo 516
 he priuely haþ told al his entent
 vnto aman . and vnto his wyf^t him sent^t 518

A maner Sergeant^t was þis priue man 519
 The which þat^t faithful oft^t he founden hadde
 In þinges grete . and eek^t such folk wel can [leaf 123, back]
 Don execucioʒn in þinges badde
 The lord knew wel þat^t he him loued and dradde 523
 And whan þis sergeant^t wist^t his lordes wille
 In to þe chamber he stalked him ful stille . 525

Ma dame he sayd 3e most forziue it me 526
 Though I do þing. to which I am constreynit.
 3e ben so wys þat ful wel knowe 3e
 þat lordes hestes mow not ben I-feynit
 Thay mowe wel biwayl it or compleyn it/ 530
 But men moot neede vnto her lust obeye
 And so wol I þer is no more to seye 532

This child I am comaundid for to take / 533
 And spak no more. but out þe child he hent
 Dispitously and gan a chiere make
 As þough he wold han slayn it er he went
 Grisild moot al suffer and al consent 537
 And as a lamb sche sitteth meeke and stille /
 And let þis cruel *sergeant* doon his wille 539

Suspecious was þe defame of þis man 540
 Suspect his face. suspect his word also /
 Suspect þe tyme. in which he þis bigan
 Allas hir doughter þat she loued so
 Sche wend he wold han slayen it right þo 544
 But napeles sche neyþer weep ne siked
 Conformyng hir to þat þe marquis liked 546

But atte last speke sche bigan 547
 And mekely sche to þe *sergeant* preyde
 So as he was a worþy gentil man
 That she most kisse hir child er þat it deyde
 And on hir arm þis litel child sche leyde 551
 wiþ ful sad face. and gan þe child to blesse
 And lullyd it and after gan it kesse / 553

And þus sche sayd in hir benigne vois 554
 Far wel my child I schal þe neuer see /
 But sith I þe haue marked wiþ þe croys /
 Of þilke fader blessed mot þou be

- That for vs deyde vpon a cros of tre 558
 Thy soule litel child . I him bytake [leaf 124]
 For pis night schaltow deyen for my sake / 560
- I trowe þat to a norice in pis caas 561
 It had ben hard pis rewthe for to see
 wel might a moder þan haue cryed allas
 But napeles so sad stedefast was sche
 þat she endured al aduersite 565
 And to þe sergeant mekely sche sayde /
 Haue her agayn þour litel þonge mayde 567
- Goth now quod sche and doþ my lordes heste 568
 But o þing wil I pray þow of þour grace
 þat but my lord forbede þow atte leste
 Burieth þis litel body in som place
 That bestes ne no briddes it to-race / 572
 But he no word wil to þe purpos say /
 But took þe child and went vpon his way 574
- This sergeant com vnto þis lord agayn 575
 And of Grisildes wordes and hir cheere
 He tolde poynt for poynt in schort and playn
 And him presentith with his douȝter deere
 Som what þis lord hath rewthe in his manere 579
 But napeles his purpos huld he stille /
 As lordes doon whan þay woln haue her wille 581
- And bad þe *sergeaunt* þat he priuely 582
 Scholde þis childe softe wynde and wrappe /
 with alle circumstaunces tendurly
 And cary it in a cofre or in his lappe
 Vpon payne his heed of for to swappe 586
 That no man schulde knowe of þis entent
 Ne whens he com . ne whider þat he went 588

But at Boloyn to his suster deere	589
That pilke tyme of panik was Countesse	
He schuld it take and schewe hir þis matiere	
Byseching her to doon hir busynesse	
This child to fostre in alle gentilesse	593
And whos child þat it was he bad hir hyde	
From euery wight for ought þat mighte bytyde	595
The sergeant goþ and haþ fulfild þis þing	596
But to þis marquys now retourne we	[Leaf 124, back]
For now goþ he ful fast ymaginyng	
If by his wyues cher he mighte se	
Or by hir word appareyue þat sche	600
were chaunged. but he hir neuer coupe fynde	
But euer in oon y-like sad and kynde /	602
As glad as humble as busy in seruise /	603
And eek in loue as sche was wont to be	
was sche to him in euery maner wyse /	
Ne of hir doughter nouȝt o word spak sche	
Non accident/ for noon aduersite	607
was seyn in hir ne neuer hir doughter name	
Ne nempnyd sche. in ernest ne in game	609

[No break in the MS.]

¶ Incipit. Quarta pars.

I N þis estaat þer passed ben foure ȝer	610
Er sche wiþ childe was. but as god wolde	
A knaue child sche bar by þis waltier	
Ful gracious and fair for to biholde	
And whan þat folk it/ to his fader tolde	614
Nouȝt oonly he. but al his contre merye	
was for þis child and god þay þank and herie	616
W hen it was tuo ȝer old and fro þe brest	617
Departed fro his noris vpon a day	
This markys caughte ȝit another lest	

- To tempt^t his wif^t ȝit^t after if^t he may
 O needles was sche tempted in assay 621
 But^t weddid men ne knowen no mesure
 whan þat^t þay fynde . a pacient^t creature 623
- Wyf^t quod þis marquys ȝe han herd er þis 624
 My peple sekly berith oure mariage
 And namly syn . my sone y-boren is
 Now is it^t wors þan euer in al our age
 The murmur sleþ myn hert and my corrage 628
 For to myn eeris comeþ þe vois so smerte
 þat^t it^t wel neigh destroyed haþ myn herte . 630
- Now say þay þus whan wauter is a goon 631
 Than schal þe blood of Ianacula succede
 And ben our lord for oper haue we noon .
 Suche wordes saith my poeple out/ of drede / [leaf 125]
 wel ought^t I of such murmur taken heede 635
 For certeynly I drede such sentence
 þough þay not pleynly speke in myn audience / 637
- I wolde lyue in pees if^t þat^t I might^t 638
 wher for I am disposid outrely
 As I his suster seruede by night
 Right^t so þynk^t I to serue him priuely
 This warn I ȝou þat^t ȝe not^t sodeinly 642
 Out^t of ȝour self for no þing^t schuld outraye
 Beþ pacient and þer of I ȝow pray 644
- I haue quod sche sayd þus and euer schal 645
 I wol no þing^t ne nil no þing^t certayn
 But^t as ȝow list^t . nought^t greueth me at al
 Though þat^t my doughter and my sone be slayn .
 At^t ȝour comaundement^t þis is to sayne 649
 I haue no had no part of children twayne
 But^t first^t syknes and after wo and payne / 651

3e ben oure lord doth with 3our owne ping^t 652
 Right^t as 3ow list^t axith no red of^t me
 For as I left^t at hom al my cloping^t
 whan I first^t com to 3ow right^t so quod sche
 Left^t I my wille and my liberte / 656
 And took^t 3our cloping^t. wher for I 3ow preye
 Dop 3oure plesaunce. I wil 3oure lust^t obeye 658

And certes if^t I hadde prescience 659
 3our wil to knowe. er 3e 3oure lust^t me tolde
 I wold it doon wipoute negligence
 But^t now I wot^t 3our lust^t and what^t 3e wolde
 Al 3our plesaunce ferm and stable I holde 663
 For wist^t I pat^t my deth wold don 3ow ease
 Right^t gladly wold I deye 3ow to please 665

Deth may make no comparisoun 666
 vnto 3our loue and whan þis marquys say
 The constance of^t his wyf^t he cast^t a doun
 His ey3en tuo and wondrith pat^t sche may
 In pacience suffre al þis array 670
 And forth he goþ with drery countenaunce
 But to his hert^t it^t was ful gret^t plesaunce [*leaf 125, back*] 672

This Igly sergeaunt in þe same wise 673
 That^t he hir doughter fette. right^t so he
 Or worse if^t men worse can deuyse
 hath hent hir sone pat^t ful was of^t beaute
 And euer in oon so pacient^t was sche 677
 That^t sche no cheere made of^t heynesse
 But^t kist^t hir sone. and after gan him blesse 679

Saue þis sche prayed him if^t pat^t he mighte 680
 her litel sone he wold in corþe graue
 His tendre lymes delicate to sight
 From foules and from bestes him to saue

But sche noon answer of him mighte haue 684
 he went his way as him no þing ne rough
 But to Bolyne he tenderly it brought 686

This marquis wondreth euer þe lenger þe more 687
 vpon hir pacience . and if þat he
 Ne hadde soþly knowen þer bfore
 þat parfytyl hir children loued sche
 he wold haue wend þat of som subtilte 691
 And malice or of cruel corrage
 That sche had suffred þis wiþ sad visage 693

But wel he knew þat next himself certayn 694
 Sche loued hir children best in euery wise
 But now of wommen wold I aske fayn
 If þese assayes mighten not suffice
 what couþe a stourdy housebonde more deuyse 698
 To prove hir wyfhode and her stedefastnesse /
 And he contynuyng euer in stourdynesse 700

But þer ben folk of such condicioun 701
 That whan þay haue a certeyn purpos take
 Thay can nought stynt of her entencioun
 But right as þay were bounden to a stake /
 þay wil not of her firste purpos slake 705
 Right so þis marquys fullich hap purposed
 To tempt his wyf as he was first disposed 707

He wayteth if by word or countenaunce 708
 That sche to him was chaunged of corage
 But neuer couþe he fynde variaunce [leaf 126]
 Sche was ay oon in hert and in visage
 And ay þe ferþer þat sche was in age / 712
 The more trewe if þat it were possible /
 Sche was to him and more penyble . 714

For which it' semyd þis þat of' hem tuo 715

þer nas but oo wil for as walter lest/

The same plesaunce was hir lust also

And god by thanked al fel for þe best/

Sche schewed wel. for no worldly vnrest' 719

A wyf' as of' hir self' no þing' ne scholde

wylne in effect'. but' as hir housbond wolde 721

The slaunder of' walter ofte and wyde spradde 722

That' of' a cruel hert' he wikkedly

For he a pore womman weddid hadde

hath morthrid boþe his children priuely

Such murmur was among' hem comunly 726

No wonder is for to þe peples eere

Ther com no word. but' þat' þay morthrid were / 728

For which wher as his peple þer byfore 729

had loued him wel þe slaunder of' his diffame

Made hem þat' þay him hatede þerfore

To ben a morderer. is an hateful name

But' napeles for ernest' or for game 733

he of' his cruel purpos nolde stente

To tempt' his wyf' was set al his entente 735

Whan þat' his doughter twelf' ȝer was of' age 736

he to þe court' of' Rome in suche wise

Enformed of' his wille sent his message

Comaundyng hem. such bulles to deuyse

As to his cruel purpos may suffise 740

how þat' þe pope as for his peples reste

Bad him to wedde anoþer if' him leste 742

I say he bad þay schulde countrefete 743

The popes bulles makyng' mencioun

That' he hap leue his firste wyf' to lete

As by þe popes dispensacioun

To stynte rancour and discencioun 747
 Bitwix his peple and him þus sayd þe bulle [leaf 126, back]
 The which þay han publisshid atte fulle / 749

The rude poepel as it^t no wonder is 750
 wende ful wel þat^t it had be right^t so
 But^t whan þese tydynges come to Grisildis
 I deeme þat^t hir herte was ful wo
 But^t sche y-like sad for euermo 754
 Disposid was þis humble creature
 Thaduersite of^t fortun al tendure 756

Abydyng^t euer his lust^t and his plesaunce 757
 To whom þat^t sche was ȝiue hert and al
 As to hir verray worldly suffisaunce
 But^t schortly if^t I þis story telle schal
 This marquys writen haþ in special 761
 A letter in which he schewith his entent
 And secrely he to Boloyn it sent / 763

To therl of^t panyk/ which þat^t hadde þo 764
 weddid his suster prayd he specially
 To brynge hom aȝein his children tuo
 In honorable estaat^t al openly
 But oon þing^t he him prayde outerly 768
 That^t he to no wight^t þough men wold enquire
 Schuld not^t tellen . whos children þay were 770

But^t say þe mayde . schuld I-weddid be 771
 vnto þe markys of^t Saluce anoon
 And as þis eorl was prayd so dede he
 For at^t day set^t . he on his way is goon
 Toward Saluce and lordes many oon 775
 In riche array þis mayden for to guyde
 hir ȝonge broþer rydyng^t by hir syde 777

Arrayed was toward hir mariage 778
 This freisshe may al ful of^t gemmes clere
 hir broþer which þat^t. seuen 3er was of^t age
 Arrayed eek^t. ful freissh in his manere /
 And thus in gret^t noblesse and with glad chere 782
 Toward Saluces schapyng^t her iournay
 Fro day to day þay ryden in her way 784

[No break in the MS.]

¶ Incipit pars Quinta.

A Mong^t al þis after his wikked vsage [leaf 127] 785
 This marquis 3it his wif^t to tempte more
 To þe vttrest^t proef^t of^t hir corrage
 Fully to han experiens and lore
 If^t þat^t sche were as stedefast as byfore 789
 He on a day in open audience
 Ful boystously haþ sayd hir þis sentence 791
 Certes Grisildes I had ynough plesaunce 792
 To haue 3ow to my wif^t for 3our goodnesse
 And for 3oure trouþe and for 3our obeissaunce
 Nought^t for 3our lignage ne for 3our richesse
 But^t now know I in verray sothfastnesse / 796
 That^t in gret lordschip if^t I wel auyse /
 Ther is gret^t seruise in sondry wyse / 798
 I may not^t do as euery plough man may 799
 My poeple me constreignith for to take
 Anoper wyf^t and certeyn day by day
 And eek^t þe popes rancour for to slake
 Consentith it þat^t dar I vndertake 803
 And trewely þus moche I wol 3ow say
 My newe wif^t is comyng^t by þe way 805
 Be strong of^t hert and voyde anon hir place 806
 And þilke dower þat^t 3e broughten me
 Tak^t it^t agayn I graunt^t it of^t my grace

- Retourneth to 3our fadres hous quod he
 No man may alway haue prosperite 810
 with euen hert' I rede 3ow endure
 The strok' of' fortune or of' aduenture 812
- And sche agayn answerd in pacience 813
 My lord quod sche I wot' and wist/ alway
 how þat' bitwixe 3our magnificence
 And my pouerte no wight' can ne may
 Make comparisoun it' is no nay 817
 ¶ I. ne held me neuer digne in no manere
 To ben 3our wyf' ne 3it' 3our Chamberere 819
- And in þis hous þer 3e me lady made / 820
 The highe god take I for my witesse
 And al so wisly he my soule glade
 I neuer huld me lady ne maistresse / [leaf 127, back]
 But' humble seruaunt' to 3our worthinesse 824
 And euer schal whil þat/ my lyf' may dure
 Abouen every worldly creature 826
- That' 3e so longe of' 3our benignite 827
 han holden me in honour and nobleye
 wher as I was not' worthy for to be
 That' þonk' I god and 3ow to whom I preye
 For3eld it' 3ow þer is more to seye 831
 vnto my fader gladly wil I wende
 And with him duelle vnto my lyues ende / 833
- Ther I was fostred as a child ful smal 834
 Til I be deed my lyf' ther wil I lede
 A widow clene in body hert and al
 For sith I 3af' to 3ow my maydenhede
 And am 3our trewe wyf' it is no drede 838
 God schilde such a lordes wyf' to take
 Anoper man to housbond or to make 840

And of 3our newe wif. god of his grace 841
 So graunte 3ow. wele and prosperite
 For I wol gladly 3elden hir my place
 I which þat I was blisful wont to be
 For sith it liketh 3ow my lord quod sche 845
 That whilom were al myn hertes reste
 That I schal gon. I wil go whan 3ow leste 847

But þer as 3e profre me such dowayre / 848
 As I ferst brought. it is wel in my mynde
 It were my wrecchid cloþes no þing faire
 þe whiche to me were hard now for to fynde
 O goode god. how gentil and how kynde 852
 3e semed by 3our speche and 3our visage
 That day þat maked was our mariage 854

But soþ is sayd algate I fynd it trewe / 855
 For in effect. it/ proued is on me
 loue is nought old. as whan þat it is newe/
 But certes lord for noon aduersite /
 To deyen in þe caas it schal not be / 859
 þat euer in word or werk I schal repente
 That I 3ow 3af myn hert in hol entente [leaf 128] 861

My lord 3e wot þat in my fadres place 862
 3e dede me strippe out of my pore wede
 And richely me cladden of 3our grace
 To 3ow brought I nought elles out of drede.
 But faith and mekenes and maydenhede / 866
 And her agayn my cloþyng I restore
 And eek my weddyng ryng for euermore 868

The remenant of 3our jewels redy be / 869
 wipin 3our chambur dore dar I saufly sayn
 Naked out of my fadres hous quod sche /
 I com and naked moot I torne agayn

Al þour pleisauns . wold I fulfille fayn 873
 But þit I hope it be not þoure entent
 That I smocles out of þour chambre went 875

3e couþe not doon so dishonest a þing 876
 þat þilke wombe in which þour children leye
 Schulde byforn þe poeple in my walkyng
 Be seye al bare wherfore I þow pray
 let me not lik a worm go by þe way / 880
 Remembre þow myn oughne lord so deere /
 I was þour wyf . þough I vnworþy were 882

Wherfor in guerdoun of my maydenhede 883
 which þat I brouȝt and nought agayn I bere
 As voucheth sauþ . as ȝeue me to my meede
 Such a smok as I was wont to were
 That I þer with may wrye þe wombe of here / 887
 þat was þour wif and here take I my leue
 Of þow myn oughne lord . lest I þow greue 889

The smok quod he þat þou hast on þy bak 890
 let it be stille and ber it forþ wiþ þe
 But wel vnnethes þilke word he spak
 But went his way for routhe and for pite
 Byforn þe folk hir seluen strippith sche / 894
 And in hir smok . wiþ heed and foot al bare
 Toward hir fader house forth is sche fare 896

The folk hir folwen wepyng in hir weye 897
 And fortune ay þay cursen as þay goon
 But / sche fro wepyng kept hir eyen dreye [leaf 128, back]
 Ne in þis tyme word ne spak sche noon
 hir fader þat þis tyding herd anon 901
 Cursed þe day and tyme þat nature
 Schoop him to ben a luyes creature 903

For out of doute þis olde þore man	904
was euer in suspect of hir mariage	
For euer he deemed sith þat it bigan	
That whan þe lord fulfilled had his corrage	
him wolde þinke þat it were disparage	908
To his estate . so lowe for to light	
And voyden hire as sone as euer he might	910
Agayns his doughter hastily quod he	911
For he by noyse of folk knew hir comyng	
And wiþ hir olde cote as it might be /	
he couered hir ful sorwfully wepynge	
But on hir body might he it nouȝt bringe	915
For rude was þe cloth . and sche mor of age	
By deyes fele . þan hir mariage	917
Thus with hir fader for a certeyn space	918
Dwellith þis flour of wifly pacience	
That neyther by her wordes ne by hir face	
Byforn þe folk nor eek in her absence	
Ne schewed sche that hir was doon offence	922
Ne of hir highe astaat no remembraunce	
Ne hadde sche . as by hir countenaunce	924
No wonder is for in hir gret estate	925
hir gost was euer in playn humilite	
Ne tender mouth noon herte delicate	
Ne pompe . ne semblant of realte	
But ful of pacient benignite	929
Discrete and prideles ay honorable /	
And to hir housbond euer meke and stable	931
Men speke of Iob . and most for his humblesse /	932
As clerkes whan hem lust can wel endite	
Namely of men . but as in sothfastnesse	
þough clerkes prayse wommen but a lite	

þer can no man in humblesse him acqyte 936
 As wommen can. ne can be half so trewe [leaf 129]
 As wommen ben. but it be falle of newe 938

[No break in the MS.]

Fro boloyne is þis erl of panik y-come 939
 Of which þe fame vp sprong to more and lasse
 And to þe poeples eeres alle and some
 was couth eek þat a newe marquisesse
 he wiþ him brought in such pomp and richesse 943
 That neuer was þer seyn with mannes ye
 So noble array in al west lombardye 945

The marquys which þat schoop and knew al þis 946
 Er þat þis erl was come sent his message /
 After þilk cely pore Grisildis
 And sche wiþ humble hert and good visage
 Not with so swollen hert in hir corrage 950
 Cam at his hest. and on hir knees hir sette
 And reuerently and wyfly sche him grette 952

Grisild quod he. my wil is outrelly 953
 This mayden þat schal weddid be to me
 Receyued be to morwe as really
 As it possible is in myn hous to be
 And eek þat euery wight in his degre 957
 haue his estaat in sitting and seruyse
 In high plesaunce as I can deuyse 959

I haue no womman suffisant certeyne 960
 The chambres for tarray in ordinance
 After my lust and þerfor wold I feyne /
 That þin were al such maner gouernaunce
 Thow knowest eek of al my plesaunce 964
 Though þyn array be badde and ille byseye
 Do þou þy deuer atte leste weye 966

- Nought' oonly lord þat' I am glad quod sche / 967
 To don þour lust'. but' I desire also /
 þow for to serue and plese in my degre
 wipoute feynynge' and schal euer mo
 Ne neuer for no wele ne for no wo 971
 Ne schal þe gost' wipinne myn herte stente /
 To loue þow best' wip al my trewe entent 973
- And wip þat' word sche gan þe hous to dight 974
 And tables for to sette and beddes make *[leaf 129, back]*
 And peyned hir to doon al þat' sche might
 Preying' þe chamberers for goddes sake
 To hasten hem and faste swepe and schake 978
 And sche þe moste seruisable of' alle /
 hap euery chamber arrayed and his halle / 980
- Abouten vnder gan þis lord alight 981
 þat' with him brought þese noble children tweye
 For which þe peple ran to se þat' sight'
 Of her array so richely biseye
 And þan at' erst' amonges hem þay seye 985
 That' walter was no forþ þough that' him lest
 To chaunge his wyf'. for it was for þe best' / 987
- For sche is fairer. as þay demen alle / 988
 Than is Grisild and more tender of age
 And fairer fruyt' bitwen hem schulde falle
 And more plesaunt' for hir high lynage
 hir broþer eek'. so fair was of' visage 992
 That' hem to seen þe peple hap caught' plesaunce
 Comending' now þe marquys gouernaunce 994
- O stormy poeple. vnsad and euer vntrewe 995
 And vndiscret' and chaungynge' as a fane
 Desyryng' euer in rombels þat is newe
 For lik' þe moone ay wax ȝe and wane

Ay ful of clappyng^t dere ynough a Iane 999
 3oure doom is fals 3our constauⁿce yuel preuith
 A ful gret^t fool is he that^t on 3ow leeuith 1001

Thus sayde saad folk in þat Citee 1002
 whan þat^t þe poeple gased vp and down
 For þay were glad right^t of þe nouelte
 To han a newe lady of^t her toun
 No more of^t þis now make I menciouⁿ 1006
 But^t to Grisildes agayn wol I me dresse
 And telle hir constance and hir busynesse / 1008

Ful busy was grisild in euey ping^t 1009
 That^t to þe feste was appertinent
 Right^t nough^t was sche abaisht^t of^t hir cloþing^t
 Though it were ruyde. and som del eek^t torent
 But^t wiþ glad cheer to þe 3ate is sche went [leaf 130] 1013
 with oþer folk^t to griete þe marquisesse
 And after þat^t doth forth hir busynesse / 1015

With so glad chier his gestes sche receyueth 1016
 And so connyngly euerich in his degre /
 That^t no defaute no man aparceyueth
 But^t ay þay wondren what^t sche mighte be
 That^t in so pouer array was for to se 1020
 And couþe such honour and reuerence
 And worthily þay prayse hir prudence 1022

In al þis mene while sche ne stent 1023
 This mayde and eek^t hir brother to comende
 with al hir hert^t. in ful buxom entent
 So wel þat^t no man couþe hir pris amende
 But^t atte last^t whan þat^t þese lordes wende 1027
 To sitte down to mete he gan to calle /
 Grisild as sche was busy in his halle 1029

- Grisyld quod he as it were in his play 1030
 how likith þe my wif and hir beaute
 Right wel my lord quod sche for in good fay
 A fairer saugh I neuer noon þan sche
 I pray to god ȝiue hir prosperite 1034
 And so hope I. þat he wol to ȝow sende
 Plesaunce ynough vnto ȝour lyues ende / 1036
- On þing warn I ȝow and biseke also / 1037
 That ȝe ne prike wiþ no tormentynge
 þis tendre mayden as ȝe haue do mo
 For sche is fostrid in hir norischinge
 More tendrely and to my supposynge / 1041
 Sche couþe not aduersite endure
 As couþe a pore fostrid creature 1043
- And whan þis walter saugh hir pacience 1044
 hir glade cheer and no malice at al
 And he so oft had doon to hir offence
 And sche ay sad. and constant as a wal
 Continuyng euer hir Innocence oueral 1048
 This sturdy marquys gan his herte dresse
 To Rewen vpon hir wyfly stedefastnesse / 1050
- This is ynough Grisilde myn quod he [leaf 130, back] 1051
 Be now no more agast ne yuel apayed
 I haue thy faith and þy benignite
 As wel as euer woman was assayed
 In gret estate and propreliche arrayed 1055
 Now knowe I dere wyf þy stedefastnesse
 And hir in armes took and gan hir kesse 1057
- And sche for wonder took of it no keepe 1058
 Sche herde not what þing he to hir sayde
 Sche ferd as sche had stert out of a sleepe
 Til sche out of hir masidnesse abrayde

Grisild quod he by god þat^t for vs deyde 1062
 Thou art^t my wyf^f ne noon oþer I haue
 Ne neuer had as god my soule saue 1064

This is my doughter which þou hast^t supposed 1065
 To be my wif^f þat^t oþer faithfully
 Schal be myn heir as I haue ay purposed
 Thow bar hem in þy body trewely
 At^t Boloyne haue I kept^t hem priuely 1069
 Tak^t hem agayn for now maistow not^t seye
 That^t þou hast^t lorn noon of^f þy children tweye 1071

And folk^t þat^t oþer weyes han seyde of^f me 1072
 I warn hem wel þat^t I haue doon þis deede
 For no malice ne for no cruelte
 But^t for tassaye in þe þy wommanhede
 And not^t to slen my children god forbede 1076
 But^t for to kepe hem priuely and stille
 Til I þy purpos knowe and al þy wille 1078

Whan sche þis herd a swoned down sche fallith 1079
 For pitous ioy. and after her swownyng^t
 Sche bothe hir 3onge children to hir callith
 And in hir armes pitously wepyng^t
 Embraseth hem and tenderly kysyng^t 1083
 Ful lik^t a moder with hir salte teris
 Sche bathis boþe hir visage and hir eeris 1085

O such a pitous þing^t it^t was to see¹
 hir swownyng^t and hir humble vois to heere
 Graunt^t mercy lord. god thank^t it 3ow quod sche [*leaf 131*]
 That^t 3e han kept^t my children so deere
 Now rek^t I neuer to be deed right^t heere 1090
 Sith I stond in 3our loue and in 3our grace
 No fors of^f deth ne whan my spirit pace 1092

[¹ This line is repeated
 in the MS., but has
 been scratcht out.]

O tender deere . 3onge children myne 1093
 3oure woful moder wende stedefastly
 That' cruel houndes or som foul vermyne
 had eten 3ow but' god of' his mercy
 And 3our benigne fader tenderly 1097
 hath doon 3ow kept' and in þat' same stounde
 Al sodeinly sche swapped doun to grounde / 1099

And in hir swough so sadly holdith sche 1100
 hir children tuo . whan sche gan hem tembrace
 That' with gret' sleight' and gret' difficulthe
 The children from her am þay gonne arace
 O many a teer . o many a pitous face . 1104
 Doun ran of' hem þat' stoden hir bisyde
 Vnnethe aboute hir mighte þay abyde 1106

Waltier hir gladith and hir sorwe slakith 1107
 Sche rysith vp abaisshed from hir traunce
 And euery wight' hir ioy and feste makith
 Til sche hath caught' agayn hir continuaunce
 wauter hir doth so faithfully plesaunce 1111
 That' it was daynte for to see þe cheere
 Bitwix hem tuo . now þay be met' in feere 1113

These ladys whan þat' þay her tyme say 1114
 han taken hir and in to chambre goon
 And strippen hir . out' of' hir rude array
 And in a cloth of' gold þat' brighte schon
 with a coroun of' many a riche stoon 1118
 vpon hir heed þay in to halle hir brought
 And þer sche was honoured as hir ought 1120

Thus hath þis pitous day a blisful ende 1121
 For euery man and womman doth his might
 This day in mirth and revel to despende
 Til on þe welken schon þe sterres bright

For more solempne in euery mannes sight ^t	1125
This feste was and gretter of ^t costage	[leaf 131, back]
Than was þe reuel of ^t hir mariage /	1127

Ful many a ȝer in heigh prosperite	1128
lyuen þese tuo in concord and in rest ^t	
And richeliche his doughter maried he	
vnto a lord on of ^t þe worthiest ^t	
Of ^t al ytaile and þanne in pees and rest ^t	1132
His wyues fader in his court ^t he kepith	
Til þat ^t þe soule out ^t of ^t his body crepith	1134

His sone succedith in his heritage	1135
In rest ^t and pees. after his fader day	
And fortunat ^t . was eek ^t in mariage	
Al put ^t he not ^t his wyf ^t in gret ^t assay	
This world is not ^t so strong ^t it is no nay	1139
As it ^t hap ^t ben in olde tymes ȝore	
And herknith what ^t þis auctor saith þerfore	1141

This story is sayd nat ^t for þat wyues scholde	1142
Folwe Grisild. as in humilite	
For it were importable þough ^t þay wolde	
But ^t for þat ^t euery wight ^t in his degre	
Schulde be constant. in aduersite	1146
As was Grisild. therfore Petrark ^t writeth	
This story which wiþ high stile he enditeth	1148

For swich a womman was so pacient	1149
vnto a mortal man wel more vs ouȝhte	
Receyuen al in gre þat ^t god vs sent ^t	
For gret ^t skil is he proue þat ^t he wroughte	
But ^t he ne temptith no man þat ^t he boughte	1153
As saith seint ^t Iame if ^t he his pistil rede	
he prouith folk ^t al day it is no drede	1155

And suffrith vs as for our exercise 1156
 wiþ scharpe scourges of^t aduersite
 Ful ofte to be bete in sondry wise
 Nought^t for to knowe oure wille for certes he
 Er we were born. knew al our frelte 1160
 And for oure best^t is al his gouernaunce
 Leet^t vs þanne lyue in vertuous suffraunce 1162

But^t oo word lordes herkneth er I go 1163
 It^t were ful hard to fynde now a dayes [leaf 122.]
 As Grisildes in al a toun þre or tuo
 For if^t þat^t þay were put^t to such assayes
 The gold of^t hem haþ now so badde alayes 1167
 with bras þat^t þough þe coyn be fair at^t ye
 hit^t wolde raþer brest^t in tuo þan plye 1169

For which heer for þe wyues loue of^t bathe 1170
 whos lyf^t and alle of^t hir secte god meyntene
 In high maistry and elles were it^t scathe
 I wil with lusty herte freisch and grene
 Say ȝow a song^t to glade. ȝow I wene 1174
 And lat^t vs stynt^t of^t earnestful matiere
 herknith my song^t. þat^t saith in þis manere / 1176

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ Lenvoye. de Chaucer.

G Risild is deed and eek^t hir pacience 1177
 And bothe at^t oones buried in Itayle
 For whiche I crye in open audience / 1179
 No weddid man so hardy be to assayle
 his wyues pacience in hope to fynde
 Grisildes for in certeyn he schal fayl 1182

- O noble wyues ful of heigh prudence / 1183
 let noon humilite 3our tonges nayle
 Ne lat no clerk haue cause or diligence 1185
 To write of 3ow a story of such meruayle /
 As of Grisildes pacience and kynde
 Lest Chichiuache 3ow swolwe in hir entraile 1188
- Folwith Ecco pat holdith no silence 1189
 But euer answereth at þe countretayle
 Beþ nou3t bydaffed for 3our Innocence 1191
 But scharply tak on 3ow þe gouernayle
 Empryntith wel þis lessoun in 3our mynde
 For comun profyt sith it may auayle 1194
- 3e archewyues stondith at defens 1195
 Syn 3e ben strongt as is a greet Chamayle
 Ne suffre not þat men 3ow don offens 1197
 And selendre wydewes felle as in batayle
 Beth egre as is a Tyger 3ond in Inde
 Ay clappith as a mylle I 3ow counsaile 1200
- Ne drede hem not. do hem no reuerence [*leaf 132, back*] 1201
 For þough þin housbond armed be in mayle
 The arwes of þy crabbid eloquence 1203
 Schal perse his brest and eek his aduentayle /
 In gelousy I rede eek þou him bynde
 And þou schalt make him couche as doth a quayle 1206
- If þou be fair þer folk ben in presence 1207
 Schew þou þy visage and þin apparaile
 If þou be foul be fre of þy despense 1209
 To gete þe frendes do ay þy trauayle /
 Be ay of chier as light as lef on lynde /
 And let hem care and wepe and wryngt and wayle 1212
- Explicit.

¶ here bygynneth þe prolōge of þe marchaundis tale.

WEpyng^t and wailyn^t care and oþer sorwe
 I knowe ynough boþe on euen & on morwe
 Quod þe marchaund. and so doon oþer mo
 That weddid ben I trowe þat^t it be so 1216
 For wel I woot^t it^t fareth so with me
 I haue a wyf^t. þe worste þat^t may be
 For þough þe feend to hir y-coupled were
 Sche wold him ouer macche I dar wel swere 1220
 what^t schuld I þow reherse in special
 hir high malice. sche is a schrewe at^t al
 Ther is a long^t and a large difference
 Betwix Grisildes grete pacience 1224
 And of^t my wyf^t þe passyng^t cruelte
 were I vnbounden also mot I the
 I wolde neuer eft^t come in þe snare
 we weddid men lyue in sorwe and care 1228
 Assay who-so wil and he schal fynde /
 That^t I say soth by seint Thomas of^t Inde
 As for þe more part^t. I say not alle
 God schilde þat^t it scholde so byfalle / 1232
 A good s^r host^t. I haue y-weddid be
 Thise monthes tuo and more not par de
 And ȝit^t I trowe he þat^t al his lyue
 wyfles hap^t ben þough þat men wold him riue 1236
 vnto þe hert^t ne couþe in no manere /
 Tellen so moche sorwe as I now heere [leaf 133]
 Couþe telle of^t my wyfes cursednesse /
 No quod our ost^t! marchaunt^t so god þow blesse 1240
 Sin ȝe so moche knowen of^t þat^t art
 Ful hertily tellith vs a part^t
 Gladly quod he of^t myn oughne sore
 For sory hert^t I telle may na more 1244

[No gap in the MS.]

¶ Narrat'

Whilom þer was duellyng' in lombardy
 A worþy knight' þat' born was of' pauy
 In which he lyued in gret' prosperite
 And fourty 3er. a wifes man was he 1248
 And folwed ay his bodily delyt'
 On wommen. ther was his appetyt'
 As doon þese fooles þat/ ben seculere
 And whan þat' he was passed fourty 3ere 1252
 were it' for holyness or for dotage
 I can not' say. but' such a gret' corrage
 hadde þis knight'. to ben a weddid man
 That' day and night'. he doþ al þat' he can 1256
 Taspye wher þat' he mighte weddid be
 Praying' our lord to graunte him þat' he
 Might' oones knowen of' þat' blisful lif'
 þat' is bitwix an housbond and his wyf' 1260
 And for to lyue vnder þat' holy bond
 with which god first'. man to womman bond
 Noon oþer lif' said he is worth a bene
 For wedlok' is so holy and so clene 1264
 That' in þis world it is a paradis
 Thus sayd þis olde knight' þat' was so wys
 And certainly as soth as god is king'
 To take a wyf'. is a glorious þing/ 1268
 And namely whan a man is old and hoor
 Than is a wyf' þe fruyt' of' his tresor
 Than schuld he take a 3ong' wif' and a fair
 On which he might' engendre him an hair 1272

And lede his lyf in mirth and in solace
 wher as þese bachileres synge allas
 whan þay fynde eny aduersite
 In loue which is but childes vanite [leaf 133, back] 1276
 And trewely it sit wel to be so
 That bachilers haue ofte peyne and wo
 On brutil ground þay bulde brutelnesse /
 þay fynde whan þay wene sikernesse 1280
 Thay lyue but as a brid oþer as a best
 In liberte and vnder noon arrest
 Ther as a weddid man in his estate
 lyuith his lif busily and ordinate 1284
 vnder þe ȝok of mariage I-bounde
 wel may his herte in ioie and blisse abounde /
 For who can be so buxom as a wyf /
 who is so trewe and eek so ententyf 1288
 To kepe him seek and hool as is his make
 For wele or woo sche wol him not forsake /
 Sche is not very him to loue and serue
 Theigh þat he lay bedred. til þat he sterue 1292
 And ȝet som clerkes seyn it is not so
 Of whiche theofrast/ is oon of þo
 what fors þough theofrast. liste lye
 Ne take no wif quod he for housbondrye 1296
 As for to spare in houshold þy dispense
 A trewe seruauñt doth more diligence
 þy good to kepe þan þin oughne wif /
 For sche wol clayme half part in al hir lif 1300
 And if þat þou be seek so god me saue
 þyne verray frendes or a trewe knaue
 wol kepe þe bet. þan sche þat waytith ay
 After þy good and hath doon many day 1304
 And if þat þou take a wif be war
 Of oon peril. which declare I ne dar.
 This entent and an hundrid siþe wors
 writith þis Mas ther god his bones curs 1308

But take no keep of al such vanite
 Deffy theofrast and herkne me
 A wyf is goddes ȝifte verrayly
 Al oþer maner ȝiftes hardily 1312
 As landes rentes pasture or comune
 Or oþer moebilis ben ȝiftes of fortune [leaf 184]
 That passen as a schadow on a wal
 But dred not/ if I playnly telle schal 1316
 A wyf wil last and in þin hous endure
 wel lenger þan þe lust/ *par* aduenture
 Mariage is a ful gret sacrament
 he which haþ no wif I hold him schent 1320
 he lyueth helples. and is al desolate
 I speke of folk/ in seculer estate
 And herken why I say not þis for nought
 The womman is for mannes help I-wrought 1324
 The heighe god whan he had adam maked
 And saugh him aloone body naked
 God of his grete goodnes sayde þanne
 Let vs now make an helpe to þis manne 1328
 lyk to himself/. and þan he made Eue
 her may ȝe see. and here may ȝe preue
 That wyf is mannes help and his comfort
 his paradis terrestre and his desport 1332
 So buxom and so vertuous is sche /
 Thay mosten neede lyue in vnite.
 O fleisch þay ben. and on blood as I gesse
 haue but oon hert. in wele and in distresse / 1336
 ∴ A wyf a seinte mary benedicite
 how might a man haue eny aduersite
 That haþ a wyf. certes I can not say
 The ioie þat is betwixen hem tway 1340
 Ther may no tonge telle ne herte þink
 If he be pore sche helpith him to swynk
 Sche kepith his good and wastith neuer a del
 And al þat her housbond list. sche likith it wel 1344

Sche saith nough^t oones nay whan he saith 3e
 Do þis saith he. al redy sir saith sche
 O blisful ordre o wedlok^t precious
 Thou art^t so mery and ek^t so vertuous 1348
 And so comendid and approued eek^t
 That^t euery man þat^t holt^t him worth a leek^t
 vpon his bare knees ought^t al his lyf^t
 Thanken his god þat^t him haþ sent a wif^t [*leaf 134, back*] 1352
 Or pray to god oon him for to sende
 To be with him vnto his lyues ende /
 For þan his lyf^t is set^t in sikernesse /
 he may not^t be deceyued as I gesse / 1356
 So þat^t he worche after his wyfes red
 þan may be boldely bere vp his heed
 Thay ben so trewe and also so wyse
 For whiche if^t þou wolt do as þe wyse 1360
 Do alway so þe womman wol þe rede
 lo how þat^t Iacob as þe clerkes rede
 By good counseil of^t his moder Rebecke
 Band þe kydes skyn about^t his sones nekke 1364
 For which his fader benesoun he wan
 Lo Iudith as þe story telle can
 By wys counseil sche goddes poepel kept^t
 And slough^t him oliphernus whil he slept^t 1368
 Lo abygaille by good counseil how sche /
 Sauyd hir housbond Nacab whan þat^t he /
 Schold han ben slayn And loke after also
 By good counseil deliuered out^t of^t wo^t 1372
 þe poeple of^t god. and made him mandoche
 Of^t Assure enhaunsed for to be
 Ther nys no þing / in gre superlatif^t
 As saith Senec^t aboue an humble wyf 1376
 Suffre þy wyues tonge as Catoun byt^t
 She schal comaunde and þou schalt^t suffre it
 And ȝit sche wil obeye of^t curtesye
 A wif^t is keper of^t þin housbondrye 1380

wel may þe sike man wayle and wepe
 Ther as þer is no wyf þe hous to kepe
 I warne þe if wisly þou wilt wirche
 loue wel þy wyf as crist doth his chirche 1384
 If þou louest þiself þou louest þy wyf /
 No man hatith his fleissch but in his lif /
 he fostrith it and þerfore warne I þe
 Cherissh þy wif. or þou schalt neuer the 1388
 housbond & wif what men iape or pleye
 Of worldly folk holden þe righte weye [leaf 135]
 Thay ben so knyht þer may noon harm bytyde
 And nameliche vpon þe wyues syde 1392
 For which þis Ianuary of which I tolde
 Considered hath Inwith his dayes olde /
 The lusty lif the vertuous quite
 That is in mariage hony-swete 1396
 ¶ And for his frendes on a day he sent
 To tellen hem theffect of his entent
 wiþ face sad. he hap hem this tale told
 he sayde frendes I am hoor and old 1400
 And almost god woot at my pittes brinke
 vpon my soule som what most I þynke
 I haue my body folily dispendid
 Blessed be god that I schal be amendid 1404
 For I wil be certeyn a weddid man
 And þat anoon in al þe hast I can
 vnto som mayde fair and tender of age /
 I pray 3ow helpith for my mariage 1408
 Al sodeynly. for I wil not abyde
 I wil fonde tesprien on my syde
 To whom I may be weddid hastily
 But for als moche as 3e ben mo than I. 1412
 3e schul rather such a þing asprien
 þan I and wher me lust best to allien
 But oo þing warne I 3ow my frendes deere /
 I wil noon old wyf haue in no manere / 1416

GROUP E. § 4. MERCHANT'S TALE. Harleian 7334. 307

Sche schal not^t passe ·sixtene 3er certayn
 Old fleisch and 3ong^t fleisch þat^t wold I haue ful fayn
 Bet^t is quod he a pyk^t þan a pikereþ
 And bet^t þan olde boef^t is tendre vel 1420
 I wil no womman twenty 3er of^t age
 It^t nys but^t bene straw and gret^t forage
 And eek^t þese olde wydewes god it woot^t
 Thay can so moche craft^t of^t wades boot 1424
 So moche broken harm whan þat^t hem list^t
 That^t wiþ hem schuld I neuer lyuen in rest^t
 For sondry scolis maken subtil clerkes
 womman of^t many a skile half^t a clerk^t is [*leaf 135, back*] 1428
 But^t certeyn a 3ong^t þing^t may men gye
 Right^t as men may warm wax with hondes plye
 wher for I say 3ow plenerly in a clause
 I wil noon old wyf^t han right^t for þat^t cause 1432
 For if^t so were I hadde so meschaunce
 þat^t I in hir coupe haue no plesaunce
 Than schuld I lede my lyf^t in aduoutrie
 And go streight^t to þe deuel whan I dye. 1436
 Ne children schuld I noon vpon hir geten
 3et^t were me leuer houndes had me eten
 þan þat^t myn heritage schulde falle
 In straunge hond and þus I telle 3ow alle 1440
 I doute not. I wot^t þe cause why
 Men scholde wedde. and forþermor woot I
 Ther spekith many man of^t mariage
 That^t wot^t nomore of it þan wot^t my page 1444
 For whiche causes. man schuld take a wyf^t
 If^t he ne may not^t chast^t be by his lif^t
 Take him a wif^t with gret^t deuocioun
 By cause of^t lawful procreacioun 1448
 Of^t children to þonour of^t god aboue
 And not^t oonly for paramour and for loue.
 And for þay schulde leccherye eschiewe
 And 3eld oure dettes whan þat^t it is due 1452

Or for þat ilk^t man schulde helpen oþer
 In meschief^t as suster schal to þe broþer
 And lyue in chastite ful heuenly
 But^t sires by 3our leue þat am not I 1456
 For by þanked I dar make anaunt
 I fele my lemys stark^t and suffisaunt
 To doon al þat^t a man bilongeth vnto
 I wot^t my selue best^t what^t I may do 1460
 ¶ Though I be hoor I fare as doþ a tree *Nota*
 That^t blossemith er þat^t þe fruyt^t I-waxe be
 A blossemy tre is neither drye ne deed
 I fele me no-wher hoor but^t on myn heed 1464
 Myn herte and my lymes ben as greene.
 As laurer þurgh þe 3eer is for to seene *af 136]*
 And synnes 3e han herd al myn entent
 I pray 3ow to my wille 3e assent^t 1468
 Diuerse men diuersly him tolde
 Of mariage many ensamples olde
 Some blamed him some praised it^t certayn
 But^t atte laste schortly for to sayn 1472
 As alday fallith altercacioun
 Bitwixe frendes in despitesoun
 Ther fel a strif^t bitwen his bretheren tuo *Nota*
 Of which þat^t oon was clepid Placebo 1476
 Iustinus sople cleped was þat oþer
 Placebo sayde .o. Ianuary broþer
 Ful litel need had 3e my lord so deere
 Counsel to axe of eny þat^t is heere 1480
 But^t þat^t 3e ben so ful of sapience
 That^t 3ow ne likith for 3our heigh prudence /
 To wayue fro þe word of Salamon
 This word said he vnto vs euerychoon 1484
 werk/ al þing^t by counsail þus sayd he /
 And þanne schaltow nought^t repente þe
 But^t þough þat^t Salamon speke such a word
 Myn owne deere broþer and my lord 1488

So wisly god bring^t my soule at^t ese and rest
 I holde 3our oughne counseil is þe best/
 For broþer myn of^t me tak^t þis motif^t
 I haue now ben a court^t man al my lyf^t 1492
 And god wot^t þough. þat^t I vnworþy be
 I haue standen in ful gret degre
 Abouten lordes in ful gret^t estat
 3it^t had I neuer with noon of^t hem debaat 1496
 I neuer hem contraried trewely
 I wot^t wel þat^t my lord can more þan I
 what^t þat^t he saith I hold it ferm and stable
 I say þe same or elles þing^t semblable 1500
 A ful gret^t fool is eny counselour *nota*
 þat^t seruith any lord of^t high honour
 þat^t dar presume or oones þenken it /
 That^t his counseil schuld passe his lordes wit^t [*cf* 136, *bh*] 1504
 Nay lordes ben no fooles by my fay
 3e haue 3our self^t y-spoken heer to day
 So heigh sentens so holly and so wel
 þat^t I consente and conferme euery del 1508
 3our wordes alle. and 3oure oppinioun
 By god þer is no man in al þis toun
 Ne in ytaile coupe better haue sayd
 Crist^t holdith him of^t þis ful wel a-payd 1512
 And trewely it^t is an heigh corrage
 Of any man þat^t stopen is in age /
 To take a 3ong^t wyf^t by my fader kyn
 3our herte hongith on a ioly pyn 1516
 Doth now in þis matier right^t as 3ow lest^t
 For fynally I hold it^t for þe best^t
 Iustinus þat^t ay stille sat^t and herde /
 Right^t in þis wise he to placebo answerde / 1520
 Now brother myn be pacient^t I 3ow pray
 Syns 3e haue sayd. and herknith what^t I say
 Senec^t amonges oþer wordes wyse
 Saith þat^t a man aught^t him wel auyse 1524

To whom he ȝiueþ his lond or his catel
 And syns I aught' auyse me right' wel
 To whom I ȝiue my good away fro me
 wel more I aught' avised for to be 1528
 To whom I ȝiue my body for alwey
 I warn ȝow wel. it' is no childes pley
 To take a wyf' wiþoute avisement'
 Men most' enquire þis is myn assent 1532
 wher sche be wys or sobre or dronkelewe
 Or proud or oþer way a schrewe
 A chyder or a wastour of' þy good
 Or riche or pore or elles man is wood 1536
 Al be it so þat no man fynde schal
 Noon in þis world þat' trottith hool in al
 Neyther man ne best' such as man can deuyse
 But' natheles it aught' ynough suffise 1540
 wiþ any wyf' if' so were þat' sche hadde
 Mo goode thewes þan hir vices badde [leaf 137]
 And al þis askith leyser to enquire
 For god woot' I. haue weped many a tere 1544
 Ful priuely syns I haue had a wyf'
 Prayse who so wil a weddid mannes lif'
 Certes I fynd in it but' cost' and care
 And obseruaunce of' alle blisses bare 1548
 And ȝit god woot' myn neighebour aboute
 And namely of' wommen many a route
 Sayn þat' I haue þe moste stedefast wyf' /
 And eek' þe meekest' oon þat' berith lyf' 1552
 But' I woot' best' wher wryngith me my scho nota
 ȝe may for me right' as ȝow liste do
 Auysith ȝow ȝe ben a man of' age
 how þat' ȝe entren in to mariage 1556
 And namly with a ȝong' wif' and a fair
 By him þat' made water eorþe and air
 The ȝongest' man þat' is in al þis route
 Is busy ynough to bring' it wel aboute 1560

To haue his wif' alloone trustith me
 3e schul not' please hir fully 3eres þre
 This is to say to doon hir ful plesaunce
 A wyf' axith ful many an obseruaunce 1564
 I pray 3ow þat' 3e be not' euel apayd
 wel quod þis Ianuary and hastow sayd
 Straw for þy senec' and for þy prouerbis
 I coueyte nought' a panyer ful of herbes 1568
 Of' scole termes wiser men þan þow /
 As I haue sayd assenten her right' now
 Vnto my purpose . placebo what' say 3e
 I say it is a cursed man quod he / 1572
 That' lettith matrimoine sicurly
 And with þat word þay rysen vp sodeinly
 And ben assented fully þat' he scholde
 Be weddid whan him lust'. and wher he wolde 1576
 The fantasy . and þe curious busynesse
 Fro day to day . gan in þe soule impresse
 Of' Ianuary aboute his mariage
 Many a fair schap and many a fair visage [*leaf 137, back*] 1580
 Ther passith þorough his herte night' by night
 As who so took' a mirroure polissched bright'
 And set' it' in a comun market place
 Than schuld he se . many a figure pace 1584
 By his mirour and in þe same wise
 Gan Ianuary in his þought' deuyse
 Of' maydens which þat' duellid him bisyde
 he wist' not' where þat' he might' abyde 1588
 For þough þat' oon haue a beaute in hir face
 Anoper stant' so in þe poeples grace
 For hir sadnesse and hir benignite
 That' of' þe poeple grettest' vois had sche 1592
 And som were riche and hadde badde name
 But' napeles bitwix ernest' and game
 he atte last/ appoynted him anoon
 And let' al oper fro his herte goon 1596

And ches hir of his oughne auctorite
 For loue is blynd al day and may not se/.
 And whan he was in to bedde brought
 He purtrayed in his hert^t and in his þought 1600
 Hir freische beaute and hir age tendre
 Hir myddel smal hir armes long^t and sclendre
 Hir wise gouernaunce hir gentillesse /
 Hir wommanly beryng^t and hir sadnesse 1604
 And whan þat he on hir was condescendid
 him þought his chois mighte nought^t ben amendid
 For whan þat^t he himself^t concludid hadde
 Him þough ech oþer mannes wyf so badde 1608
 That^t impossible it were to repplie
 Agayn his choys þis was his fantasie
 his frendes sent he to at^t his instaunce
 And prayed hem to doon him þat plesaunce 1612
 That^t hastily þay wolde to him come
 he wold abrigge her labour alle and some
 Nedith no more for him to gon ne ryde
 he was appoynted þer he wold abyde / 1616
 Placebo cam and eek^t his frendes soone /
 And althirfirst^t. he bad hem alle a boone [leaf 138]
 That^t noon of hem noon argumentis make /
 Agayn þe purpos. which þat^t he had take 1620
 which purpos was plesaunt to god sayd he /
 And verray ground of his prosperite
 He sayd þer was a mayden in þe toun
 which þat^t of beaute hadde gret^t renoun 1624
 Al were it so sche were of smal degre /
 Suffisith him hir trouth and hir beaute /
 which mayde he sayd he wold haue to his wyf^t
 To lede in ease and holinesse his lyf^t 1628
 And þanked god þat^t he might^t haue hir al
 That^t no wight^t his blisse parten schal
 And preyed hem to laboure in þis neede
 And schapen þat^t he faile not^t to speede 1632

For þan he sayd his spirit^t was at ease
 Than is quod he no þing^t may me displease /
 Saue oon þing^t prikkith in my conscience /
 The which I wil reherse in þour presence 1636
 I haue herd sayd quod he ful þore ago
 Ther may no man haue parfy^t blisses tuo
 This is to say in erthe and eek^t in heuene
 For þough he kepe him fro þe synnes seuene / 1640
 And eek^t from ylk^t a braunche of þilke tre
 3it^t is þer so parfy felicite
 And so gret^t ease and lust^t in mariage
 That^t euer I am agast^t now in myn age 1644
 That^t I schal lede now so mery a lyf^t
 So delicat^t wiþoute wo and stryf^t
 That^t I schal haue myn heuen in erthe heere
 For sith þat^t verrey heuen is bought^t so deere 1648
 with tribulacioun and gret penaunce
 how schuld I þanne þat liue in such plesaunce
 As alle wedded men doon with her wyues
 Come to blisse ther crist^t eterne on lyue is 1652
 This is my drede and 3e my breþeren tweye
 Assoilith me þis questioun I 3ow preye
 Iustinus which þat^t hated his folye
 Answerd anon right^t in his iaperie [leaf 138, back] 1656
 And for he wold his longe tale abrigge
 he wolde noon auctorite alegge
 But^t sayde sir. so ther be noon obstacle
 Oþer þan þis god of his high miracle 1660
 And of his mercy may so for 3ow wirche
 That^t er 3e haue þour rightes of holy chirche
 3e may repente of weddid mannes lyf^t
 In which 3e sayn þer is no wo ne stryf^t 1664
 And elles god forbede but he sente
 A weddid man grace him to repente
 wel ofte rather þan a sengle man
 And þerfor sire þe beste reed I can 1668

Dispaire 3ow nough^t but^t haue in 3oure memorie
 Paraduenture she may be 3our purgatorie
 Sche may be goddes mene and goddes whippe *nota*
 Than schal 3our soule vp to heuen skippe 1672
 Swyfter þan doþ an arwe out of a bowe
 I hope to god her after 3e shuln knowe
 That^t þer nys noon so gret^t felice
 In mariage ne neuermor schal be 1676
 þat^t 3ou schal lette of 3our sauacioun
 So þat^t 3e use as skile is and resoun
 The lustes of 3our wyf^t attemperely
 And þat^t 3e please hir not to amorously 1680
 And þat^t 3e kepe 3ow eek^t from oþer synne
 My tale is doon. for my witt^t is þynne
 Beþ not^t agast^t her of my broþer deere /
 But^t let^t vs waden out of þis matiere 1684
 The wif^t of Bathe if 3e han vnderstonde
 Of mariage which 3e han now on honde
 Declared hath ful wel in litel space
 Fareth now wel god haue 3ow in his grace 1688
 And with þat^t word þis Iustinus and his broþer
 Han tak^t her leue and ech of hem of oþer
 And whan þay saugh^t þat^t i most needis be
 Thay wroughten so by sleight^t and wys trete 1692
 That^t sche þis mayden which þat/ Mayus high^t
 As hastily as euer sche might [leaf 139]
 Schal weddid be vnto þis Ianuarie
 I trow it were to longe 3ow to tarie 1696
 If I 3ow tolde of euery scrit and bond
 By which þat sche was feoffed in his lond
 Or for to herken of hir riche array
 But^t finally y-comen is þat^t day 1700
 That^t to þe chirche boþe ben þay went
 For to receyue þe holy sacrement^t
 Forth comth þe preost with stoole about his necke
 And bad hir be lik Sarra and Rebecke 1704

In wisdom and in trouth of mariage
 And sayd his orisouns as is vsage /
 And crouched hem and bad god schuld hem blesse /
 And made al secur ynowgh with holinesse 1708
 Thus ben þay weddid wiþ Solempnite
 And atte fest' sittith he and sche
 with othir worþy folk' vpon the deys
 Al ful of ioy and blis is that' paleys 1712
 And of Instrumentz and of vitaile
 The moste deinteuous of ytaile
 Biforn hem stood such Instruments of soun
 That' Orpheus ne of Thebes Amphioune 1716
 Ne maden neuer such a melodye
 At' euery cours ther cam loud menstralcye
 That' neuer tromped Ioab for to heere
 Ne he Theodomas ȝit' half' so cleere / 1720
 And Thebes whan the cite was in doute
 Bachus þe wyn hem schenchith al aboute
 And venus laughith vpon euery wight
 For Ianuary was bycome hir knight / 1724
 And wolde bothe assayen his corrage /
 In liberte and eek / in mariage
 And with hir fuyrbrond in hir hond aboute
 Daunceth bifore þe bryde and al þe route 1728
 And certeynly I dar right' wel say þis
 Imeneus þat' god of weddyng' is
 Seigh neuer his lif' so mery a weddid man
 holde þy pees thow poete marcian [leaf 139, back] 1732
 That' writest' vs. þat' ilke weddyng' merye
 Of hir philologie and he mercurie
 And of þe songes that' the muses songe
 To smal is boþe þy penne and eek' þy tonge 1736
 For to descriue of þis mariage
 whan tender ȝouthe haþ weddid stoupyng' age
 Ther is such mirthe. þat' it may not' be write
 Assaieth it ȝour self þan may ȝe wyte 1740

If þat I lye or noon in þis mateere
 Mayus þat sit with so benigne a cheere /
 Hir to bihold it / semed fayerye /
 Queen ester loked neuer with such an ye 1744
 On assure so meke a look' hap sche
 I may not ʒow deuyse al hir Beaute
 But thus moche of hir Beaute telle I may
 That sche was lyk' þe bryghte morw of may 1748
 Fulfuld of alle Beaute and plesaunce
 This Ianuary is rauyscht in a traunce
 At euery tyme he lokith on hir face
 But in his hert' he gan hir to manace 1752
 That he þat night in armes wold hir streyne
 Harder þan euer paris did Eleyne
 But natheles ʒit had he gret' pite
 That pilke night offenden hir most' he / 1756
 And þought' alas .o. tendre creature
 Now wolde god ʒe mighte wel endure
 Al my corrage. it is so scharp and keene
 I am agast ʒe schul it not' susteene 1760
 For god forbede þat I dede al my might
 Now wolde god þat it were woxe night
 And þat þe night wold stonden euermo
 I wold þat al þis poeple were a go 1764
 And fynally he doth al his labour
 As he best' mighte sauynge his honour
 To hast' hem from þe mete in subtil wise
 The tyme cam þat resoun was to ryse 1768
 And after þat men daunce and drynke fast
 And spices about' þe hous þay cast' [leaf 140]
 And ful of ioy. and blis is euery man
 Al but' a squier that' hight' Damyan 1772
 which karf tofor þe knight' ful many a day
 he was so rauyssht' on his lady may
 That for þe verray peyne he was nigh wood
 Almost' he swelt' and swowned as he stood 1776

So sore hap venus hurt him wip hir brond
 As þat sche bar it daunsyng in hir hond
 And to his bed he went him hastily
 No more of him as at þis tyme telle I 1780
 But þer I lete him now his wo compleyne
 Til freisshe may wol rewen on his peyne /
 O perilous fuyr þat in þe bed-straw bredith Auctor
 O famuler fo þat his seruice bedith 1784
 O seruaunt traitour false homly hewe
 lyk to þe nedder in bosom vntrewe /
 God schild vs alle from þour acqueintance /
 O Ianuary dronken in plesaunce 1788
 Of mariage se how þy damyan
 Thyn oughne squier and þy borne man
 Entendith for to do þe vilonye /
 God graunte þe þin homly fo espye 1792
 For in þis world nys worse pestilence /
 Than homly foo . alday in þy presence
 Parfourmed hap þe sonne his ark diourne
 No lenger may þe body of him sojourne 1796
 On thorisonte . as in latitude
 Night with his mantel þat is derk and rude
 Gan ouersprede themesperie aboute
 For which departed is þe route 1800
 Fro Ianuary with þank on euery side /
 hoom to her hous lustily þay ryde
 wher as þay doon her þinges as hem leste
 And whan þay seigh her tyme þay goon to reste / 1804
 Soone after þat . þis hasty Ianuarie
 wold go to bed . he wold no lenger tarie
 he drinkith ypocras clarre and vernage /
 Of spices hote to encre his corrage [leaf 140, back] 1808
 And many a letuary had he ful fyn
 Such as þe cursed monk daun Constantin
 Hath writen in his book de coitu
 To ete hem alle he nas no þing eschieu 1812

And to his priue frendes þus sayd he
 For goddes loue as soon as it may be
 let voyden al þis hous in curteys wise
 And þay han doon right^t as he wold deuysel 1816
 Men drinken and þe trauers drawe anoon
 The bruyd was brought^t abedde as stille as stoon
 And whan þe bed was with þe prest^t I-blessid
 Out^t of þe chambre haþ euery wight^t him dressed 1820
 And Ianuary haþ fast^t in armes take/
 His freisshe may / his paradys his make
 He lullith hir he kissith hir ful ofte
 with pikke bristlis on his berd vnsofte 1824
 lik^t to þe skyn of houndfisch scharp as brere
 For he was schaue al newe in his manere
 He rubbith hir about^t hir tendre face
 And sayde þus allas I mot^t trespace 1828
 To 3ow my spouse. and 3ow gretly offende /
 Er tyme come þat^t I wol doun descende
 But^t napeles considerith þis quod he
 Ther nys no werkman what^t so euer he be 1832
 þat^t may boþe werke wel and hastily
 This wol be doon at^t leysir parfitly
 It^t is no fors how longe þat we pleye
 In trewe wedlock^t coupled be we tweye 1836
 And blessed be þe 3ok^t þat we ben Inn
 For in actes we mow do no synne
 A man may do no synne with his wif^t
 Ne hurt^t himseluen wiþ his oughne knyft^t 1840
 For we han leue to play vs by þe lawe
 Thus laborith he til þat^t þe day gan dawne
 And þan he takith a sop in fyn clarre
 And vpright^t in his bed þan sittith he 1844
 And after þat^t he song^t ful lowd and clere
 And kissed his wyf^t and made wantoun cheere [*leaf 141*]
 he was al coltissch ful of^t ragerye
 And ful of iargoun as a flekked pye 1848

The slakke skyn about' his nekke slakeþ
 whil þat' he song'. so chaunteþ he and craketh
 But' god wot' what' þat' may þought' in hir hert /
 whan sche him saugh vp sittying' in his schert' 1852
 In his night' cappe and with his nekke lene
 Sche praysith nought' his pleying' worth a bene
 Than sayd he þus my reste wol I take
 Now day is come I may no lenger wake 1856
 And doun he layd his heed and sleep til prime
 And afterward whan þat' he saugh his tyme
 Vp riseth Ianuary but' freissche may
 Holdith hir chamber vnto þe fourþe day 1860
 As vsage is of' wyues for þe best'
 For euery labour som tyme moot' haue rest'
 Or elles longe may he not' endure
 This is to say. no lyues creature 1864
 Be it'. fisch or brid. or best' or man
 Now wol I speke of' woful damyan
 That' languyssh for loue as 3e schuln here
 Therfore I speke to him in þis manere 1868
 ¶ I say. O sely damyan allas Auctor
 Answer to my demaunde as in þis caas
 how schaltow to þy lady freissche may
 Telle þy woo. sche wol alway say nay 1872
 Eek' if' þou speke sche wol þy woo bywreye
 God be þin help I can no better seye
 This seke damyan in venus fuyr
 So brennith þat' he deyeth for desir 1876
 For which he put' his lyf' in aduenture
 No lenger might' he in þis wo endure
 But' priuely a penner gan he borwe
 And in a letter wrot' he al his sorwe 1880
 In maner of' a compleynt' or of' a lay
 vnto his faire freissche lady may
 And in a purs of' silk' heng' on his schert'
 he hap' it' put' and layd it at his hert' [leaf 141, back] 1884

¶ The moone þat' anoon was þilke day That' Ianuary had weddid freische may In tuo of taure was in to Cancre gliden So long' hath mayus in hir chambre abiden	1888
As custom is vnto þese nobles alle A bryde schal not' eten in þe halle Til dayes foure. or þre dayes atte lest' I-passed ben. þan let' hir go to þe fest'	1892
The fourthe day complet fro noon to noon whan þat' þe heighe masse was I-doon In halle sitte. þis Ianuary and may. As freissch as is þe brighte someres day	1896
And so bifelle þat' þis goode man Remembrid him vpon þis Damyan And sayde seinte mary how may þis be That' Damyan entendith not' to me	1900
Is he ay seek' or how may þis bityde his squiers which þat' stode þer bisyde. Excusid him by cause of' his syknesse which letted him to doon his busynesse	1904
Noon oper cause mighte make him tarie That' me forthinkith quod þis Ianuarie he is a gentil squyer by my troupe If' þat' he deyde it' were harm and routhe	1908
he is as wys discret' and eek' secre As any man I wot' of' his degre And þerto manerly and seruysable And for to be a thrifty man right' able	1912
But' after mete as soon as euer I may I wol myself' visit him and eek' may To doom him al þe comfort' þat' I can And for þat' word him blessed euery man	1916
That' of' his bounte and his gentillesse he wolde so comfort' in seekenesse his squyer. for it' was a gentil deede Dame quod þis Ianuary tak' good heede	1920

At' after-mete 3e wiþ 3our wommen alle /
 whan 3e han ben in chambre out' of' þis halle [leaf 142]
 That' alle 3e goo to se þis Damyan
 Doth him desport'. he is a gentil man 1924
 And tellith him þat' I wil him visite
 Haue I no þing'. but' rested me a lyte /
 And spedith 3ow faste for I wol abyde
 Til þat' 3e slepe faste by my syde 1928
 And with þat' word. he gan vnto him calle
 A squier þat' was marchal of' his halle
 And told him certeyn þinges what' he wolde
 This freissche may hath streight' hir wey I-holde 1932
 wiþ alle hir wommen vnto Damyan
 Doun by þe beddes syde sat' sche þan
 Comfortyng' him as goodly as sche may
 This damyan whan þat' his tyme he say 1936
 In secre wise his purs and eek' his bille /
 In which þat' he. I-writen had his wille
 Hap put' in to hir hond wiþouten more
 Saue þat' he siketh wonder deepe and sore 1940
 And softely to hir right þus sayd he /
 Mercy and þat' 3e not' discouer me
 For I am deed if' þat' þis þing' discouered be
 þis purs in hir bosom hud had sche 1944
 And went' hir way 3e gete no more of' me
 But vnto Ianuary comen is sche
 þat' on his beddes syde sit' ful softe /
 And takith hir and kissith hir ful ofte / 1948
 And layd him doun to slepe and þat' anoon
 Sche feyned hir as þat' sche moste goon
 Ther as 3e woot' þat' euery wight' moot' neede
 And whan sche of' þis bille hap taken heede / 1952
 Sche rent' i al to cloutes atte laste
 And in to þe priuy softely it cast/
 who studieth now but faire freissche may
 A-doun by olde Ianuary sche lay 1956

- That slepith til þat. þe coughe hæp him awaked
 Anoon he prayde stripen hir al naked
 he wold of hir he sayd haue som plesaunce
 hir clothis dede him he sayde som grevaunce [*U* 142, *bh*] 1960
 And sche obeieth be hir lief or loth
 But lest that precious folk be with me wroth
 how þat he wroughte. I dar not telle
 Or wheþir it semed him paradys or helle 1964
 But here I lete hem werken in her wise
 Til euensong rong and þan þay most arise
 wheþir it be by desteny or aduenture
 were it by influence or by nature 1968
 Or by constellacioun þat in such estate
 The heuen stood þat tyme fortunate
 As for to putte a bulle of venus werkis
 For alle þing hath tyme as seyn þese clerkis 1972
 To eny womman for to gete hir loue
 I can not say but grete god aboue /
 þat knowith þat noon acte is causeles
 He deme of al. for I wil holde my pees 1976
 But soth is þis how þat þis freisshe may
 hath take such impressioun þat day
 Of pite of þis sike damyan
 That from hir herte sche ne dryue can 1980
 The remembraunce for to doon him ease /
 Certeyn þought sche. whom þat þis þing displease
 I rekke not for her I him assure
 To loue him best of eny creature / 1984
 Though he no more hadde þan his scherte
 Lo pite renneth soone in gentil herte
 heer may 3e see how excellent fraunchise
 In womman is. whan þay narow hem auyse 1988
 Som tyraunt is as þer ben many oon
 That hæp an hert as hard as is a stoon
 which wold han lete steruen in þe place
 wel rather þan han graunted him her grace 1992

And hem reioysen in her cruel pride
 And rekken nouȝt to ben an homicide
 ¶ This gentil may fulfillid of pite
 Right of hir hond a letter maked sche / 1996
 In which sche *grauntith* him hir verray grace
 Ther lakkid nought but oonly day and place [leaf 143]
 wher þat sche might vnto his lust suffice
 For it schal be right as he wol deuyse 2000
 And whan sche saugh hir tyme vpon a day
 To visite þis damyan goþ May
 And subtilly þis lettre doun sche thruste
 Vnder his pylow. rede it if him luste 2004
 Sche takith him by þe hond and hard him twiste
 So secretly þat no wight of hit wiste
 And bad him be al hool and forþ sche wente
 To Ianuary whan þat he for hir sente 2008
 vp ryseth Damyan þe nexte morwe
 Al passed was his siknes and his sorwe /
 He kembith him. he pruneth him and pyketh
 he doth al þat vnto his lady likith 2012
 And eek to Ianuary he goth as lowe /
 As euer did a dogge for þe bowe /
 He is so plesaunt vnto euery man
 For craft is al. who so þat do it can 2016
 That euery wight is fayn to speke him good
 And fully in his lady grace he stood
 Thus lete I damyan about his neede
 And in my tale forth I wol procede 2020
 Some clerkes holden þat felicite
 Stant in delit and þerfor certeyn he
 This noble Ianuary with al his might
 In honest wise as longith to a knight. 2024
 Schop him to lyue ful deliciously
 his housyng his array as honestly
 To his degre was maked as a kynges
 Amonges oper of his honest þinges 2028

he made a gardyn walled al wiþ stoon
 So fair a Gardyn wot I no wher noon
 For out of doute I verrely suppose
 That he þat wroot þe romauns of þe Rose 2032
 Ne coupe of hit þe Beaute wel deuysen
 Ne Pirapus ne might not wel suffice
 Though he be god of gardyns for to telle /
 The Beaute of þe gardyn and þe welle [leaf 143, back] 2036
 That stood vnder a laurer alway greene
 Ful ofte tyme he Pluto and his queene
 Preserpina and al þe fayerie
 Desporten hem and maken melodye 2040
 Aboute þat welle and daunced as men tolde
 This noble knight þis Ianuary þe olde
 Such deynte hap in it to walk and pleye
 That he wold no wight suffre bere þe keye 2044
 Saue he himself for of þe smale wyket
 he bar alway of siluer a smal cliket
 wiþ which whan þat him list he it vnschette
 And whan he wolde pay his wyf hir dette / 2048
 In somer sesoun þider wold he go
 And may his wyf and no wight but þay tuo
 And þinges which þat weren not doon in bedde
 he in þe gardyn parforned hem and spedde 2052
 And in þis wise many a mery day
 lyued þis Ianuary and freische may
 But worldly ioye may not alway endure
 To Ianuary ne to no creature 2056
 ¶ O sodeyn hap. O þou fortune vnstable nota bene
 lyk to þe scorpion so desceyuable
 þat flaterest with þin heed whan þou wilt styng
 Thy tayl is deþ þurgh þin enuynmyng 2060
 O. britel ioye. o sweete venym queynte
 O monster þat so subtilly canst peynte
 Thyn giftes vnder hiew of stedfastnesse
 That þou desceyuest boþe more and lesse / 2064

why hastow Ianuary þus deceyued
 That' haddist him for þy fulle frend receyued
 And now þou hast' byref't' him boþe his yen
 For sorw of' which desireth he to dyen 2068
 Allas þis noble Ianuary fre
 Amyd his lust' and his prosperite
 Is woxe blynd and þat' al sodeynly
 he wepith and he weyleth pitously 2072
 And þer with al þe fuyr of' Ialousye
 lest' þat' his wif' schuld falle in som folye [leaf 144]
 So brent' his herte . þat' he wolde fayn
 That' som man boþe hir and him had slayn 2076
 For neyþer after his deth nor in his lyf'
 Ne wold he þat' sche were loue ne wyf'
 But' euer lyue as wydow in clothes blake /
 Soul as þe turtill þat' lost' haþ hir make 2080
 But' atte last' after a moneth or tweye
 his sorwe gan aswage soþ to seye
 For whan he wist' it may noon oþer be /
 he patiently took' his aduersite 2084
 Saue out' of' doute he may not' forgoon
 That' he nas Ialous euermore in oon
 which Ialousie it was so outrageous
 That' neyþer in halle . ne in noon oþer hous 2088
 Ne in noon oþer place neuer þe mo
 he nolde suffre hir to ryde or go
 But' if' þat' he had hond on hir alway
 For which ful ofte wepeth freische may 2092
 That' loueth Damyan so benignely
 That' sche moot' outhur deyen sodeinly
 Or elles sche moot' han him as hir lest'
 She waytith whan hir herte wolde brest' 2096
 vpon þat' oþer syde Damyan
 Bicomē is þe sorwfulleste man
 That' euer was for neyther night ne day
 Ne might' he speke a word wiþ fressche may 2100

As to his purpos of no such matiere
 But if þat Iannary most it heere
 That had an hond vpon hir euermo
 But napeles by writyng to and fro 2104
 And priue signes wist he what sche ment/
 And sche knew eek þe fyn of his entent
 ¶ O Iannary what might it þe auaille
 If þou might see. as fer as schippes saile 2108
 For as good is. blynd deceyued be /
 As to be deceyued whan a man may see
 Lo argus which þat had an hundred eyen
 For al þat euer he couþe poure or prien [leaf 144, back] 2112
 3et was he blent as god wot so ben moo
 That weneth wisly þat it be noughit so
 Passe ouer is an ease I say no more
 This freissche may þat I spak of so 3ore 2116
 In warm wex hath emprynted þe cliket
 That Iannary bar of þe smale wiket/
 with which in to his gardyn ofte he went
 And damyan þat knew al his entent 2120
 The cliket counterfeted priuely
 Ther nys no more to say but hastily
 Som wonder by þis cliket schal betyde
 which 3e schal heeren if 3e wol abyde 2124
 ¶ O noble Ouyde wel soth saistow god woot
 what sleight is it/ þough it be long & hoot
 That he nyl fynd it out in som manere
 By Piramus and Thesbe may men leere 2128
 Though þay were kept ful longe streyt ouer al
 Thay ben accorded rownyng þurgh a wal
 Ther no wight couþe han found out swich a sleight
 But now to purpos er þat dayes eyght 2132
 were passid. er þe moneth of Iuyl bifille
 That Iannary haþ caught so gret a wille
 Thorugh eggyng of his wyf him for to pleye
 In his gardyn and no wight but we tweye 2136

That in a morwe vnto þis may saith he /
 Rys vp my wif. my loue. my lady fre /
 The turtlis vois. is herd my douue swete
 The wynter is goon. with his raynes wete 2140
 Come forth now with. þin eyzen columbine
 how fairer ben þy brestes þan is þe wyne
 The gardyn is enclosed al aboute
 Com forth my swete spouse out of doute 2144
 Thow hast me wounded in myn hert. o. wyf
 No spot of þe knew I in al my lif /
 Com forth and let vs / take oure desport /
 I ches þe for my wyf and my comfort 2148
 Such olde lewed wordes vsed he /
 On damyan a signe made sche [leaf 145]
 That he schuld go. biforn with his cliket
 This damyan þan haþ opened þe wiket 2152
 And in he stert and þat in such manere /
 That no wight. it mighte see nor heere
 And stille he seet vnder a bussch anoon
 This Ianuary is blynd as is a stoon 2156
 with Mayus in his hond and no wight mo
 In to his freische gardyn is ago
 And clappid to þe wiket sodeinly
 Now wyf quod he her nys but 3e and I 2160
 þat art þe creature þat I best loue
 For by þat lord þat sit in heuen aboue
 leuer ich had to dyen on a knyf
 Than þe offende deere trewe wyf 2164
 For goddes sake þenk how I þe chees
 Noughit for no coueytise douteles
 But oonly for þe loue I had to þe
 And þough þat I be old and may not se 2168
 Beeth trewe to me and I wol telle 3ow why
 Thre þinges certes schul 3e wynne þer by
 First loue of crist and to 3our self honour
 And al myn heritage toun and tour 2172

I ȝiue it ȝow makith chartres as ȝow leste
 This schal ben doon to morw er sonne reste
 So wisly god my soule bringe in blisse
 I pray ȝow first in couenaunt ȝe me kisse 2176
 And þough þat I be ialous wyt me nought
 ȝe ben so deep emprinted in my þoughȝt
 þat whan þat I considre ȝour beaute
 And þer wiþ al þe vnlikly eelde of me 2180
 I may nought certes þough I schulde dye
 Forbere to ben out of ȝour companye
 For verray loue þis is wiþouten doute
 Now kisse me wyf and let vs Rome aboute 2184
 This freissche may whan sche his worde herde
 Benignely to Ianuary answerde /
 But first and forward sche bigan to wepe
 I haue quod sche a soule for to kepe [leaf 145, back] 2188
 As wel as ȝe and also myn honour
 And of my wifhod þilke tendre flour
 which þat I haue ensured in ȝour hond
 whan þat þe prest to ȝow my body bond 2192
 wherfor I wil answer in þis manere
 By þe leue of ȝow my lord so deere
 I pray to god þat neuer dawe þe day
 That I ne sterue as foule as womman may 2196
 If euer I do to my kyn þat schame
 Or elles I empaire so my name
 That I be fals and if I do þat lak
 Doth strepe me and put me in a sak 2200
 And in þe nexte ryuer do me drenche
 I am a gentil womman and no wenche
 why speke ȝe thus. but men ben euer vntrewe
 And wommen han reproef of ȝow euer newe 2204
 ȝe haue noon oþer contenaunce I leue /
 But speke to vs of vntrust and repreue
 And with þat word sche saugh wher damyan
 Sat in þe buissȝ and coughen sche bigan 2208

And wiþ hir fynGRES signes made sche
 That' damyan schuld clymb vpon a tre nota
 That' charged was with fruyt/ and vp he went/
 For verrayly he knew al hir entent' 2212
 And euery signe þat' sche couthe make
 wel bet' þan Ianuary hir oughne make
 For in a letter sche had told him al
 Of þis matier how he worche shal 2216
 And þus I lete him sitte vpon þe pirie
 And Ianuary and may romynge mirye
 ¶ Bright was þe day and blew þe firmament
 Phebus haþ of gold his stremes down I-sent 2220
 To gladen euery flour with his warmnesse
 he was þat' tyme in gemmes as I gesse
 But' litel fro his declinacioun
 Of Caker. Ioues exaltacioun 2224
 And so bifel þat' brighte morwen tyde
 That' in þat gardyn in þe ferther syde / [leaf 146]
 Pluto that' is kyng' of fayerye
 And many a lady in his compaignie 2228
 Folwyng' his wif' þe queene preserpine
 Ech after oþer. as right' as a lyne
 whil þat' sche gadred floures in þe mede
 In claudian 3e may þe story rede 2232
 how in þis grisly carte he hir fette
 This king' of fayry þan adoun him sette /
 vpon a bench of turues freissh and greene
 And right' anoon þus sayd he to his queene / 2236
 ¶ My wyf' quod he þer may no wight' say nay
 Thexperiens so preueth euery day
 The tresoun which þat' womman doth to man
 Ten hundrid þousand. tellen I can 2240
 Notable of 3our vntrouth and brutelnesse
 O. Salamon wys and richest' of richesse /
 Fulfuld of Sapiens. and of worldly glorie /
 Ful worpy ben þy wordes to memorie 2244

To euery wight^t þat^t wit and resoun can
 Thus praysith he ȝit^t þe bounte of^t man
 Among^t a þousand men ȝit^t fond I con
 But of^t wommen alle fond I noon 2248
 Thus saith þe king þat^t knoweth ȝour wikkednesse
 And Ihesu filius Sirac / as I gesse /
 Ne spekith of^t ȝow but^t selde reuerence
 A . wilde fuyr and corrupt^t pestilence 2252
 So falle vpon ȝour bodies ȝit^t to night^t
 Ne se ȝe not^t þis honorable knight^t
 By cause allas þat^t he is blynd and old
 his owne man schal make him cokewold 2256
 loo wher he sitt^t. þe lechhour in þe tre
 Now wol I graunten of^t my maieste /
 Unto þis olde blinde worþy knight^t
 þat^t he schal haue aȝein his eyȝen sight^t 2260
 whan þat^t his wyf^t wol do him vilonye
 Than schal he knowe al her harlotrye
 Boþe in reproef^t of^t her and oþer mo
 ȝe schal quod preserpine and wol ȝe so [leaf 146, back] 2264
 Now by my modres sires soule I swere
 That^t I schal ȝiue hir suffisaunt^t answe^re /
 And alle wommen after for hir sake
 That^t þough þay be in any gult^t I-take 2268
 with face bold þay schul hemself^t excuse
 And bere hem down þat^t wolde hem accuse
 For lak^t of^t answer noon of^t hem schal dyen
 Al had a man seyn a þing^t wiþ boþe his yen 2272
 ȝit schul we wymmen visage it hardily
 And wepe and swere and chide subtilly
 So þat^t ȝe men schul ben as lewed as gees
 what^t rekkith me of^t ȝour auctoritees 2276
 I wot^t wel þat^t þis Iew þis Salamon
 Fond of^t vs wommen fooles many oon
 But^t þough he ne fond no good womman
 ȝet^t hap þer founde many anoþer man 2280

women ful trewe . ful good and vertuuous
 witnesse on hem þat' duelle in 'cristes hous
 with martirdom þay proued her constaunce
 The romayn gestes eek' make remembraunce 2284
 Of' many a verray trewe wyf' also .
 But' sire be nought' wrath al be it so
 Though þat' he sayd he fond no good womman
 I pray 3ow tak' þe sentens of' þe man 2288
 he mente þus þat' in souereign bounte
 Nis noon but' god þat' sit' in trinite
 Ey for verrey god þat nys but oon
 what' make 3e so moche of' Salamon 2292
 what' pough he made a temple goddes hous
 what' pough he were riche and glorious
 So made he eek' a temple of' fals godis
 How might' he do a þing' þat more forbod is 2296
 Par de als fair as 3e his name emplastre
 he was a lecchour and an ydolastre
 And in his eelde he verrailly god forsook'
 And if' god ne had as saip' þe book' 2300
 I-spared him for his fadres sake he scholde
 Haue left' his regne raper þan he wolde [leaf 147]
 I sette right' nough't' of' þe vilonye
 That 3e of' women write a boterflie 2304
 I am a womman needes most' I speke
 Or elles swelle til myn herte breke
 For syn sche sayd þat' we ben iangleresses
 As euer hool I moote brouke my tresses 2308
 I schal not' spare for no curtesye /
 To speke him harm þat' wold vs vilonye
 Dame quod þis pluto be no lenger wroth
 I 3iue it' vp but/ sith I swere myn oth 2312
 That' I wil graunte him his sight' agein
 My word schal stonde I warne 3ow certeyn
 I am a kyng' it' sit' me nought' to lye
 And I quod sche a queen of' faierie 2316

hir answer schal sche haue I vndertake
 Let vs no mo wordes her-of make
 For soth I wol no lenger 3ow contrarie
 ∴ Now let vs turne agayn to Ianuarye 2320
 That in þis gardyn with þis faire may
 Syngeþ ful merier þan þe papiniay
 3ow loue I best and schal and oper noon
 So long about þe aleys is he goon 2324
 Til he was come agaynes þilke pirie
 wher as þis damyan sittith ful mirye
 On heigh among þe freische leeuys greene
 This freissche may þat is so bright and scheene 2328
 Gan for to syke and sayd allas my syde
 Now sir quod sche for ought þat may bityde
 I most han of þe peres þat I see
 Or I moot dye so sore longith me 2332
 To eten of þe smale peris greene
 Help for hir loue þat is of heuen queene
 I telle 3ow wel a womman in my plyt
 May haue to fruyt so gret an appetyt 2336
 þat sche may deyen. but sche it haue
 Allas quod he þat I nad heer a knaue
 That couthe clymbe allas allas quod he
 For I am blynd. 3e sire no fors quod sche [leaf 147, back] 2340
 But wolde 3e vouche sauft for goddes sake
 The piry inwith 3our armes for to take
 For wel I woot þat 3e mys-truste me
 Than schold I clymbe wel y-nough quod sche 2344
 So I my foot might set vpon 3our bak
 Certes quod he þer on schal be no lak
 Might I 3ow helpe wiþ myn herte blood
 he stoupith down and on his bak sche stood 2348
 And caught hir by a twist and vp sche goth
 ladys I pray 3ow þat 3e be not wroþ
 I can not glose I am a rude man
 And sodeinly anoon þis damyan 2352

Gan pullen vp þe smokt and in he throng
 And whan þat pluto /saugh þis grete wrongt
 To Ianuary he 3aft his sight agayn
 [. 2356
 *no gap in the MS.*]
 Ne was þer neuer man of þing so fayn
 But on his wif his þought was euermo
 Vp to þe tree he kest his eyzen tuo / 2360
 And seigh þat damyan his wyf had dressid
 In which maner it may not ben expressid
 But if I wolde speke vncurteisly
 And vp he 3aft a roryng and a cry 2364
 As doth þe moder whan þe child schal dye
 Out. help. alas. harrow. he gan to crie
 O stronge lady stoure what dos þow
 And sche answerith sire what eylith 3ow 2368
 haue paciens and resoun in 3our mynde
 I haue 3ow holpen on boþe 3our eyen blynde
 vp peril of my soule I schal not lyen
 As me was taught to hele with 3our yen 2372
 was noþing bet. for to make 3ow see
 Than stroggle wiþ a man vpon a tree
 God woot I dede it in ful good entent
 Stroggle quod he? 3e algaþ in it went 2376
 God 3iue 3ow boþe on schames deth to dyen
 He swyued þe. I saugh it wiþ myn yen
 And elles be I honged by þe hals
 Than is quod sche medicine fals [leaf 148] 2380
 For certeynly if þat 3e mighten see
 3e wold not say tho wordes vnto me
 3e han som glymsyng and no parfytt sight
 I se quod he as wel as euer I might 2384
 Thankid be god wiþ boþe myn yen tuo
 And by my trouth me þought he did þe so
 3e. mase. mase. goode sire quod sche
 This þank haue I for I haue maad 3ow see 2388

Allas quod sche þat' euer I was so kynde
 Now dame quod he let' al passe out of mynde
 Com down my leef' and if' I haue myssayd
 God help me so as I am euel appayd 2392
 But' by my fader soule I wende haue seyn
 how þat' þis damyan had by þe leyn
 And þat' þy smok' had layn vpon þy brest
 3e sire quod sche 3e may wene as 3ow lest/ 2396
 But sire a man þat' wakith out' of his slep
 He may not' sodeynly wel take keep
 vpon a þing' ne seen it' parfytly
 Til þat' he be adawed verrayly 2400
 Right' so a man þat' long' hap blynd I-be
 Ne may not' sodeynly so wel I-se
 First' whan þe sight' is newe comen agayn
 As he þat' hap a day or tuo I-sayn 2404
 Til þat' 3our sight' y-stablid be a while
 þer may ful many a sighte 3ow bigile
 Beþ war I pray 3ow for by heuen king'
 Ful many man wenith for to se a þing' 2408
 And it' is al anoþer þan it/ semeth
 he þat' mys conceyueth he mys demeth
 And wiþ þat' word sche leep down fro þe tre
 This Ianuary who is glad but he 2412
 he kissith hir and clippith hir ful ofte
 And on hir wombe he strokith hir ful ofte
 And to his paleys hom he hath hir lad
 Now goode men I pray 3ow to be glad 2416
 Thus endith her my tale of Ianuarye
 God blesse vs and his moder seinte marie / AmeN. [leaf 148,
 back]

¶ Here endith the marchauntes tale

[*Small break in MS.*]

Ey goddes mercy sayd our hoste þo
 Now such a wyf I pray god keep me fro 2420
 lo whiche sleighthes and subtilitees
 In wommen ben for ay as busy as bees
 Ben þay vs seely men for to desceyue
 And from a soth.. euer wol þay weyue 2424
 By this marchaundes tale it proueth wel
 But douteles as trewe as eny steel
 I haue a wyf þough þat sche pore be
 But of hir tonge a labbyng schrewe is sche 2428
 And 3it sche hath an heep of vices mo
 Ther-of no fors let alle such þinges go
 But wite 3e what in counseil be it seyð
 Me rewith sore I am vnto hir teyð 2432
 And if I scholde reken euery vice
 which þat sche hath I-wis I were to nyce
 And cause why. it schuld reported be
 And told to hir of som of þis meyne 2436
 Of whom it needith not for to declare
 Syn wommen connen oute such chaffare
 And eek my witte suffisith nought þerto
 To tellen al wherfor my tale is do 2440

[*No gap in the MS.*]

GROUP F. FRAGMENT VII.

§ 1. THE SQUIRE'S HEAD-LINK.

HARLEIAN MS. 7334 (British Museum).

¶ Sir Squier com forþ. if þat þour wille be
 And say vs a tale for certes þe
 Connen þer-on as moche as ony man
 ¶ Nay sire quod he. but I wil say as I can 4
 wiþ herty wil. for I wil not rebelle
 Against þour wille. a tale wil I telle
 Haue me excused if þat I speke amys
 My wil is good. and þerto my tale is this. 8
 ¶ Her endith þe prologe

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ And her bygynneth þe Squyeres tale

AT Sarray in þe lond of Tartary [leaf 149]
 Ther dwelled a kyng^t þat^t werryed russy
 Thurgh which þer deyed many a doughty man
 This nobil kyng^t was cleped Cambynskan 12
 which in his tyme was of^t so gret^t renoun
 That^t þer^t nas nowher in no regioun
 So excellent a lord in alle þing^t /
 Him lakked nought^t þat^t longed to a kyng 16
 As of^t þe secte of^t which þat^t he was born
 he kept^t his lawe. to which he was sworn
 And þerto he was hardy wys and riche /
 And pitous and Iust^t alway yliche 20
 Soth of^t his word benign and honourable
 Of his corage as eny centre stable
 3ong^t freisch and strong^t in armes desirous
 As eny bachiler of^t al his hous 24
 A fair person he was and fortunat^t
 And kepte so wel his real astat
 That^t þer was no wher such a ryal man
 This noble kyng^t þis tartre þis Cambynskan 28
 hadde tuo sones by Elcheta his wyf^t
 Of^t which þe eldest/ highte Algaryf^t
 That^t oþer was I-cleped Samballo
 A doughter^t had þis worthi king^t also 32
 That^t 3ongest^t was and highte Canace
 But^t for to telle 3ou al hir beaute
 It lith not^t on my tong^t ne my connyng^t
 I dar nou3t^t vndertake so heigh a þing^t 36

Myn englissh eek^t is insufficient
 he moste be a Rethor excellent^t
 That coup^t his colours longyng^t for þat^t art^t
 If^t he schold hir discryue in eny part 40
 I am non such I mot^t speke as I can
 And so bifel it^t þat^t þis Cambynskan
 hap twenty wynter born his dyademe
 As he was wont fro 3er to 3er I deme 44
 he leet^t þe fest^t of^t his natiuite :
 Don cryen purgh Sarray his Cite
 The last^t Idus of^t march after þe 3eer [leaf 149, back]
 Phebus þe sonne was Ioly and cleer 48
 For he was neigh his exaltacioun
 In marc3 face and in his mansioun
 In aries þe colerik^t þe hote signe
 Ful lusty was the wedir and benigne 52
 For which þe foules a3ein þe sonne scheene
 what^t for þe sesoun & for þe 3onge greene
 Ful lowde song^t in here affeccions
 hem semed haue geten hem protecciouns 56
 A3ens þe swerd of^t wynter kene and cold
 This Cambynskan of^t which I haue told
 In royal vesture sitting^t on his deys
 with dyadem ful heigh in his paleys 60
 And held his fest^t. solempne and so riche
 That^t in þis worlde was þer noon it^t liche
 Of^t which if^t I schal tellen al þarray
 Than wold it^t occupie a someres day 64
 And eek^t it^t neediþ nou3t^t for to deuyse
 At^t euery cours þe ordre and þe seruise
 I wol nat^t tellen of^t her straunge sewes
 Ne of^t her swannes ne here heroun-sewes 68
 Ek^t in þat^t lond as tellen knightes olde
 Ther is som mete þat^t is ful-deynte holde
 That^t in þis lond men-recch of^t it but smal
 Ther is no man it may reporten al 72

I wol not tarien ȝou for it is pryme
 And for it is no fruyt but los of tyme
 vnto my purpos. I wol haue my recours
 That so bifelle after þe þridde cours 76
 whil þat þe kyng sit þus in his nobleye
 herkyng his mynstrales her þinges pleye
 Byforn him atte boord deliciously
 In atte halle dore al sodeynly 80
 Ther com a knight vpon a steed of bras
 And in his hond a brod myrour of glas
 Vpon his thomb he had of gold a ryng
 And by his side a naked swerd hangyng 84
 And vp he rideth to þe heyghe bord [leaf 150]
 In al þe halle ne was þer spoke a word
 For meruayl of þis knight him to byholde
 Ful besily þey wayten ȝong and olde 88
 This straunge knight þat cam þus sodeynly
 Al armed sauf his heed ful richely
 Salued the kyng and queen and lordes alle
 By ordre as þey seten in to halle / 92
 with so heigh reuerens and obseruaunce
 As wel in speche as in contynaunce /
 That Ewen with his olde curtesye
 They he come agein out of fayrye 96
 Ne couþe him nouȝt amende wiþ no word
 And after þis biforn þe highe bord
 he with a manly vois sayd his message
 After þe forme vsed in his langage 100
 wiþouten vice of sillabil or letter
 And for his tale schulde seme þe better
 Accordaunt to his wordes was his cheere
 As techeth art of speche hem þat it leere 104
 Al be it þat I can nat sowne his style
 Ne can nat clymben ouer so heigh a style /
 ȝit say I þis as to comun entent
 Thus moche amounteth al þat euer he ment 108

If it so be þat I haue it in mynde /
 ¶ he sayd þe kyng of Arraby and ynde
 My liege lord on þis solempne day
 Saluteth 3ou as he best can or may 112
 he sendeth 3ou in honour of 3our feste
 By me þat am redy at al his heste
 This steede of bras þat esily and wel
 That can in the space of o day naturel 116
 This is to say in four an twenty houres
 wher-so 3ou lust / in droughþe or in schoures
 Beren 3our body in to euery place
 To which 3our herte wilneþ for to pace 120
 wipouten wem of 3ou þurgh foul and fair
 Or if 3ou lust to flee as heiȝ in þair
 As doþ an egle whan him list to sore [leaf 150, back]
 This same steede schal bere 3ou euermore / 124
 wipoute harm til 3e be þer 3ou leste
 Though þat 3e slepen on his bak or reste
 And torne aȝein with wryþing of a pyn
 he þat it wrought cowþe ful many a gyn 128
 he wayted many a constellacioun
 Er he had do þis operacioun
 And knew ful many a seal and many a bond
 ¶ This mirour eek þat I haue in myn hond 132
 haþ such a mighte / þat men may in it see
 when þer schal falle eny aduersite
 Vnto 3our regne vnto 3our self also
 And openly who is 3our frend or fo 136
 And ouer al þis if eny lady bright
 hath set hir hert on eny maner wigȝt
 If he be fals sche schal his tresoun see
 his newe loue and his subtilite 140
 So openly þat þer schal noþing hyde
 wherfor aȝeins þis lusty somer tyde
 This mirour and þis ryng þat 3e may see
 he haþ send to my lady Canacee 144

3our' excellente doughter þat' is heere
 ¶ The vertu of þis ryng' and 3e wol heere :
 Is þis / þat' who . so lust' it for to were
 vpon hir thomb / or in hir purs to bere 148
 Ther is no foul / þat' fleeth vnder þe heuen
 That' schal vnderstonden his steuen .
 And know his menyng' openly and pleyn
 and answer him in his langage a3eyn 152
 And euery gras . þat' groweþ vpon roote
 Sche schal eek' know / to whom it' wol do boote
 Al be his woundes neuer so deep and wyde
 ¶ This naked swerd þat' hangeþ by my syde 156
 Such vertu hath þat' what man þat' it' smyte
 Thurghout' his armur it wol kerue and byte
 were it as þikke as a braunched ook'
 And what' man is I-wounded with þe strook' 160
 Schal neuer be hool / til þat' 3ou lust' of *grace* [*leaf 151*]
 To strok' him wiþ þe plat' in þilke place :
 Ther he is hurt' . þis is as moche to seyn
 3e moote with þe platte swerd a3ein 164
 Stroke him in þe wound and it' wol close /
 This is þe verray soth wiþouten glose /
 It' failleth nought' whil it is in 3our hold
 And whan þis knight' þus had his tale told 168
 he rit out' of þe halle and doun he light'
 his steede which þat' schon as sonne bright'
 Stant' in þe court' as stille as eny stoon
 This knight' is to his chambre lad anon . 172
 he is vnarmed and to mete I-sett'
 This presentz ben ful richely I-fett'
 This is to sayn, the swerd and the myrrour
 And born anon vnto þe highe tour 176
 with certein officers ordeynd þerfore
 And vnto Canace þe ryng' is bore :
 Solempnely ther sche syt' atte table
 But' sikerly wiþouten eny fable 180

The hors of bras þat may nat be remewed
 It stant as it were to the ground I-glewed
 Ther may no man out of þe place it dryue
 For noon engyn of wyndyng or polyue · 184
 And cause why for þey can nouȝt þe craft
 And þerfor in the place þei haue it laft
 Til þat þe knight haþ taught hem þe manere
 To voyden him as ȝe schul after heere 188
 Greet was þe pres þat swarmed to and fro
 To gauren on þis hors þat stondeþ so
 For it so wyd was and so brod and long
 So wel proporcioned to be strongt 192
 Right as it were a steed of lumbardye
 Ther-to so horsly and so quykt of ye
 As it a gentil poyleys courser were
 For certes fro his tayl vnto his eere 196
 Nature ne art ne coupe him nouȝt amende
 In no degre as al þe poeple wende
 But euermore her moste wonder was [leaf 151, back]
 How þat it coupe goon and was of bras 200
 It was of fayry as þe poeple semed
 Diuerse peple . diuersly þey demed
 As many hedes as many wittes been
 They murmured as doþ a swarm of been 204
 And made skiles after her fantasies
 Rehersyng of þe olde poetries
 And seyden it was I-like þe pagase .i. equus pegaseus
 The hors þat hadde wynges for to fle / 208
 Or elles it was þe grekissch hors Synon
 That broughte troye to destruccioun
 As men may in þe olde gestes rede /
 Myn hert quod oon is euermor in drede 212
 I trow som men of armes ben þerinne
 That schapen hem þis cite for to wynne
 It were good / þat such þing were knowe /
 Anoper rowned to his felaw lowe / 216

And sayde it lyth for it^t is raper lik^t
 An apparence maad by som magik^t
 As Iogelours pleyen at^t þis festes grete
 Of sondry þoughtes þus þey Iangle and trete 220
 As lewed peple demeth comunly
 Of þinges þat ben maad more subtyly
 Than þey can in her lewednes comprehende
 They deemen gladly to the badder ende 224
 And som of hem wondred of^t þe mirrour
 That^t born was vp in to þe maister tour
 How men might^t in hit suche þinges se
 Anoper answerd and sayd it might^t wel be 228
 Naturelly by composicioons
 Of angels and of heigh reflexioons
 And sayde þat^t in Rome was such oon
 They speeke of^t al-ceyt^t and Vitilyon 232
 Of aristotle / þat^t writen in her lyues
 Of queynte myrrours and prospectyues
 As knowen þey þat^t han her bokes herd
 And oper folk^t haue wondred on þe swerd 236
 That^t wolde passe þorughout^t euery þing^t [leaf 152]
 And fel in speche of^t Thelophus þe kyng^t
 And of achilles for his queynte spere
 For he couþe with hit^t boþe hele and dere 240
 Right^t in such wyse as men may wiþ þe swerd
 Of which right^t now ȝe haue ȝour seluen herd
 They speeken of^t sondry hardyng^t of^t metal
 And speken of^t medicines þer wiþ al 244
 And how and whan it schulde harded be /
 which is vnknowe / algaþ^t vnto me /
 Tho speeken þey of^t Canacees ryng^t
 And seyden alle / þat^t such a wonder þing^t 248
 Of craft^t of^t rynges herd þey neuer noon
 Sauþ^t þat^t he moyses and kyng^t Salamon
 Had a name of^t connyng^t in such art^t
 Thus seyen þe peple on euery part^t 252

But napeles som seiden þat it was /
 wonder þing to make of ferne glas /
 And ȝit is glas nouȝt like aisschen of ferne
 But for þey han I-knowen it so ferne 256
 Therfor cesseth her ianglyng and her wonder
 And sore wondred som of cause of þonder
 On ebbe and flood on gossomer and on myst
 And on alle þing til þat þe cause is wist 260
 Thus Ianglen þey and demen and deuyse
 Til þat þe kyng gan fro his bord arise
Phebus hath lost þe angel merydyonal
 And ȝit / ascendyng was a best roial 264
 The gentil lyoun wiþ his adryan
 whan þat þis gentil kyng þis Cambynskan
 Ros fro his bord þer as he sat ful hye
 Biforn him goth ful lowde menstralcy 268
 Til he cam to his chambre of Parementȝ
 Ther as þer were diuers instrumentȝ
 That is y-like an heuen for to heere
 ¶ Now dauncen lusty Venus children decre 272
 For in þe fische. her lady sat ful heyȝe
 And lokep on hem with a frendly eyȝe /
 This noble kyng is set vpon his trone /
 This straunge knight is fet to him ful sone [leaf 152, back] 276
 And in the daunce he gan with Canace /
 her is þe reuel and þe iolyte
 That is not able a dul man to deuyse
 he most haue knowe loue and his seruise / 280
 And ben a festly man as freisch as may
 That schulde ȝou deuyse such array
 who couthe telle ȝou þe forme of daunce :
 So vncouth and such a freisch countinaunce 284
 Such subtil lokyng of dissimilynges
 For drede of lalous folk apperceuynges
 No man but launcelet and he is deed
 Therefore I passe ouer al þis lustyheed 288

A say no more but^t in þis Iolynesse /
 I lete hem til men to soper hem dresse
 The styward byt^t þe spices for to hye
 And eek^t þe wyn in al þis melodye 292
 Thes vsschers and þes squyers ben agon
 The spices and þe wyn is come anoon
 They eet^t and drank^t and whan þis had an ende /
 vnto þe temple as resoun was þey wende / 296
 The seruise doon þey and soup^en al by day
 what^t needeth 3ou to rehersen her array
 Ech man wot^t wel þat^t a kynges feste
 hath plente to þe lest and to the meste 300
 And deyntees mo þan ben in my knowyng^t
 And after souper goþ þis noble kyng^t
 To see þis hors of^t bras wiþ al his route
 Of^t lordes and of^t ladyes al aboute / 304
 Swich wondryng^t was þer on þis hors of^t bras
 That^t seth þis grete siege of^t troye was /
 Ther as men wondred on an hors also
 Ne was þer such a wondryng^t as was þo 308
 But^t fynally þe kyng^t asked þe knight
 The vertu of^t þis courser and þe might^t
 And prayd him tellen of^t his gouernaunce
 The hors anoon gan for to trippe and daunce 312
 whan þe knight^t leyd hand vpon his rayne
 And sayde sir þer is nomore to sayne [leaf 153]
 But^t whan 3ou lust^t to ryde any where /
 3e moote trille a pyn stant in his ere 316
 which I schal telle 3ou bitwen vs two
 3e moste nempne him to what^t place also
 Or what^t countre 3ou luste for to ryde
 And whan 3e come þer 3ou lust^t abyde 320
 Bid him descende and trille anoþer pynne
 For þer in lith þe fet^t of^t al þe gynne /
 And he wol down descend and do 3our wille
 And in þat^t place he wol abyde stille 324

Though al þe world had þe contrary swore
 he schal nat' thennes be I-prowe ne bore
 Or ift 3ou lust' to bid him þennes goon
 Trille þis pyn and he wol varyssh anoon 328
 Out' of þe sight' of euery maner wight'
 And come a3ein. be it' by day or night'
 whan þat' 3ou lust' to clepen him a3ayn
 In such a gyse as I schal 3ow sayn 332
 Bitwixe 3ou and me and þerfor soone
 Byd whan 3ou lust' þer nys nomor to doone
 Enformed when þe kyng' was of þe knight'
 And had conceyued in his wit aright' 336
 The maner of þe forme and al þis þing'
 Ful glad and blith þis noble doughty kyng'
 Repeyryng' to his reuel as biforn
 The bridel is vnto þe tour I-born 340
 And kept' among' his Iewels leef' and deere
 The hors vanyscht' I not' in what manere
 Out' of her sight' 3e get' nomore of me
 But' þus I lete him in his iolite 344
 This Cambinskan his lordes festeyng'
 Til wel neigh þe day bigan to spryng'
 Explicit prima pars //

[No break in the MS.]

Incipit secunda pars

The norice of digestioun þe sleep
 Gan to him wynk' and bad of him take keep 348
 That' merthe and labour wol haue his reste
 with a galpyng' mouth he him keste
 And sayd þat it' was tyme to lye down [leaf 153, back]
 For blood was in his dominacioun 352
 Cherischeþ natures þanne quod he
 They þankyn him galpyng' by two and þre
 And euery wight' gan drawe him to his rest'
 As sleep hem bad þey took' it' for þe best/ 356

here dremes schul not now be told for me
 Ful were here heedes of fumosite
 That' causeþ drem of' which þer is no charge /
 They slepen til it was prime large / 360
 The moste part' but' it' were Canace
 Sche was ful mesurable as wommen be
 For of' hir fader haþ sche take hir leue
 To go to reste soon after it was eue / 364
 hir luste not' appalled for to be
 Ne on þe morwe vnfestly for to se /
 And kept' hir firste sleep and þan awook'
 For such a Ioye sche in herte took' 368
 Boþe of' hir queynte ryng' and hir myrrour
 That' twenty tyme chaunged hire colour
 And in hire sleep right' for impressioun
 Of' hir myrrour sche had a visioun 372
 wher-for er þat' þe sonne vp gan glyde /
 Sche cleped vpon her maistresse beside /
 And sayde þat' hire luste for to ryse
 These olde wommen þat' ben gladly wise 376
 As is here maystresse answered hir anoon
 And sayd madame whider wold ȝe goon
 Thus erly for folk' ben alle in reste /
 I wil quod sche aryse for me leste 380
 No lenger for to slepe and walke aboute
 hir maistres clepeth wommen a gret route /
 And vp þey risen a ten oþer a twelue
 vp ryseþ fresshe Canace hir selue 384
 As rody and bright as is þe ȝonge sonne
 That' in þe Ram is ten degrees I-ronne
 Non heiher was he¹ whan sche redy was [1 first, 'sche']
 And forth sche walked esily a pas 388
 Arayed after þe lusty sesoun soote [leaf 154]
 lightly for to play and walke on foote
 Nought' but' wiþ fyue or six of' hir meyne
 And a trench fer in þe park' goþ sche / 392

The vapour which þat of þe erthe glod
 Makeþ þe sonne seme rody and sot
 But napeles it was so fair a sight
 That it made alle here hertes for to light 396
 what for þe sesoun what for þe mornynge
 And for þe foules þat sche herde syng
 For right anon sche wiste what þey ment
 Right by here song and knew al here entent / 400
 ¶ The knotte why þat euery tale is told
 If that it be taryed til lust be cold
 Of hem þat han hit after herked ȝore
 The sauour passeth euer lenger þe more 404
 For fulsomnes of þe *prolixite*
 And by þis same resoun thinketh me
 I schulde to þe knotte condescende /
 And make of hir walkynge sone an ende · 408
 A-myddes a tree for-druye as whit as chalk
 As Canace was pleyng in hir walk
 There sat a faukoun ouer hir heed ful hye
 þat with a pitous vois bigan to crye 412
 I-beten hadde sche hir self so pitously
 That al the woode resowned of hire cry
 wiþ boþe hir wynges to þe reede blood
 Ran endelong þe tree þer as sche stood 416
 And euer in oon sche cried and schryght
 And wiþ hir bek hir selue so sche pight
 That þer nys tigre non ne cruel beste
 That dwelleþ eyþer in wood or in foreste 420
 That nold han wept if þat he cowde
 For sorw of hir sche schright alwey so lowde
 For þer nas neuer ȝit no man on lyue
 If that he couþe a faukoun descriue 424
 That herd of such anoper of fairnesse
 As wel of plumage as of gentillesse
 Of schap of al þat might I-rekened be [leaf 154, back]
 A faukoun peregryn þan semed sche 428

Of fremde lond and euer as sche stood
 Sche swowned now and now for lak' of blood
 Til wel neigh sche falleþ fro þe tre
 This faire kynges doughter Canace 432
 That' on hir fynger bar þe queynte ryng'
 Thurgh which sche vnderstood wel euery þing'
 That' eny foul may in his lydne sayn
 And coupe answer him in his lydne agayn 436
 haþ vnderstonde what' þe faukoun seyde
 And wel neigh almost' for rewthe sche deyde
 And to þe tree sche goth ful hastily
 And on þis faukoun lokeþ pitously 440
 And held hir lappe a-brod for wel sche wist'
 The faukoun moste falle fro þe twist'
 whan þat it swowned next' for lak' of blood
 A long while to wayten hir sche stood 444
 Til atte last' sche spak' in þis manere
 Vnto þe hauk' as 3e schul after heere
 ¶ what' is þe cause if' it be for to telle
 That 3e ben in þat' furyaH peyne of' helle 448
 Quod Canace vnto þis hauk' aboue
 Is þis for sorwe of' deth or elles loue
 For as I trowe þis ben causes tuo
 That' causen most' a gentil herte wo 452
 Of' oþer harm it needeþ nou3t' to speke
 For 3e 3our self' vpon 3our self' awreke
 which þat' preueþ wel þat' either Ire or drede
 Mote ben enchesoun of' 3our cruel dede 456
 Sith þat' I see noon oþer wight' 3ou chace
 For loue of' god so doþ 3our selue grace
 Or what ben 3our helpe for west' ner Este
 Ne saugh I neuer er now no bryd ne beste 460
 That' ferde with himself' so pitously
 3e sle me with 3our sorwe so verrily
 I haue of' 3ou so gret' compassioun
 For goddes loue com fro þe tree a down 464

And as I am a kynges doughter trewe [leaf 155]
 If þat I verrayly þe cause knewe
 Of þour disece if it lay in my might
 I wold amenden it if þat I might 468
 Als wisly help me grete god of kynde
 And herbes schal I right ynowe fynde
 To helen with þour hurtes hastyly
 Tho schright þis faukoun more pitously 472
 Than euer sche did and fil to ground anon
 And lay a-swowne deed as eny stoon
 Til Canace hath in hir lap y-take
 vnto þat tyme sche gan of swowne slake / 476
 And after þat sche gan of swown abreyde
 Right in hir haukes lydne thus sche seyde
 That pite renneth sone in gentil hert
 Felyng his similitude in peynes smerte 480
 Is proued alday as men may see
 As wel by werk as by auctorite
 For gentil herte kepeth gentillesse /
 I see wel þat þe haue on my distresse 484
 Compassioun my faire Canace
 Of verray wommanly benignite /
 That nature in þour principles hap set
 But noon hope for to fare þe bet 488
 But for to obeye vnto þour herte fre
 And for to make othere war by me
 As by þe whelp chastised is þe lyoun
 And for þat cause and þat conclusioun 492
 whiles þat I haue a leyser and a space
 Myn harm I wil confessen er I pace
 And whil sche euer of hir sorwe tolde
 That oper wept as sche to water wolde / 496
 Til þat þe faucoun bad hir to be stille /
 And with a sighhe / þus sche sayd hir tille
 ¶ Ther I was alas þat ilke day
 And fostred in a Roch of marble gray 500

So tendrely that noþing^t eyled me /
 I wiste not / what^t was aduersite
 Til I couþe flee ful heigh vnder þe sky [leaf 155, back]
 Tho dwelled a tercelet^t me faste by 504
 That^t semed welles of alle gentillesse
 Al were he ful of tresoun and falsnesse
 It^t was I-wrapped vnder humble cheere
 And vnder heewe of trouþe in such manere 508
 Vnder plesaunce and vnder besy peyne
 That^t no wight^t wende þat^t he couþe feyne
 So deep in greyn he deyed his colours
 Right^t as a serpent hut^t him vnder floures 512
 Til he may see his tyme for to byte
 Right^t so þis god of loue, þis ypocrite
 Doþ so his sermonys and his obseruaunce/
 vnder subtil colour and aqueyntaunce 516
 That^t sowneth vnto gentillesse of loue
 As in a thombe is al þe faire aboue
 And vnder is þe corps whiche þat^t 3e wot
 Such as was þis Ipocrite boþe cold and hot 520
 And in this wise he serued his entent
 That^t sauf^t þe feend noon wiste what he ment
 Til he so long^t had weped and compleyned
 And many a 3eer his seruice to me feyned 524
 Til þat^t myn hert to pitous and to nyce
 Al Innocent of his crouned malice
 For-fered of his deth as þoughte me
 vpon his othes and his sewerte 528
 Graunted him loue vpon þis condiciooun
 That^t euermo myn honour and my renoun
 were saued boþe pryuy and apert
 This is to sayn þat^t after his desert 532
 I 3af^t him al myn hert^t and al my þought
 god woot^t and he þat^t oþer weye nought
 And took^t his hert^t in chaunge of myn for ay
 But^t soþ is sayd go siþens many a day 536

A trew wight^t and a theef^t þenketh nouȝt^t oon
 And when he saugh þe þyng^t so fer I-goon
 That I *graunted* him fully my loue /
 In such a wyse as I haue sayd aboue / 540
 And ȝeuen him my trewe hert^t as fre [leaf 156]
 As he swor he ȝaf^t his herte to me /
 Anon þis Tigre ful of doublenesse
 Fil on his knees with so gret^t deuoutenesse 544
 wiþ high reuerence and as by his chere
 So lyk^t a gentil loue of^t manere
 So rauysched as it semede for Ioye
 That neuer Iason ne Parys of^t Troye 548
 Iason certes ne noon oþer man
 Siþ lameth was þat^t alþer first^t bygan
 To louen two as writen folk^t biforn
 Ne neuer siþ þe firste man was born 552
 Ne couþe man by twenty þousand part
 Contrefete þe sophemes of^t his art
 Ne were worþy to vnbokel his galoche
 Ther doublenes of^t feynyng^t schold approche 556
 Ne so couþe þankyn a knight as he did me
 His maner was an heuen for to see
 To eny womman were sche neuer so wys
 So peynteth he and kembeth poynt deuys 560
 As wel his wordes as his continuaunce
 And I so loued him for his obeisaunce
 And for þe trouthe I demed in his herte
 That^t if^t so were þat^t eny þing^t him smerte 564
 And were it neuer so litel and I it^t wist^t
 Me þought^t I felte deth at^t myn hert^t twist^t
 And schortly so ferforth þis þing^t went^t
 That^t my wil was his willes instrument 568
 This is to say my wille obeied his wille
 In alle þing^t as fer as resoun fille
 kepyng^t þe boundes of^t my worschip euer
 Ne neuer had I þing^t so leef^t ne leuer 572

As him god woot' ne neuer schal nomo
 This laste lenger þan a 3eer or two
 That' I supposed of' him nought' but good
 But' fynally atte laste þus it' stood 576
 That' fortune wolde þat' he moste twynne
 Out of' þe place which þat' I was Inne
 wher me was wo it is no questioun / [leaf 156, back]
 I can nat' make of' it descripcioun 580
 For o þing' dar I telle boldely
 I know what' is þe peyne of' deth þerby
 which harm I felt' for he ne mighte byleue
 So on a day of' me he took his leue 584
 So sorwful eek' þat' I went' verrayly
 That' he had feled als moche as I
 whan þat' I herd him speke and saugh his hewe
 But' napeles I þought' he was vntrewe 588
 And eek' þat' he schulde repeire aȝeyn
 wipinne a litel while soþ to seyn
 And resoun wold eek' þat' he moste go : for his honour
 Wher-for I wold not' ben aȝein his honour [spurious] 592
 Than I made vertu of' necessite
 And took' it' wel seþens it moste be
 As I best' might' I had for him my sorwe
 And took' him by þe hand seint' Iohn to borwe 596
 And sayde þus / lo I am 3our al
 Beþ such as I haue be to 3ou and schal
 what' he answerd it needeþ nat' to reherse
 who can best' say þan he, who can do werse // 600
 whan he haþ al wel sayd þan haþ he doon
 Therfor bihoueþ him a ful long' spoon
 That' schal ete wiþ a feend þus herd I say
 So atte last' he moste forþ his way 604
 And forth he fleeth til he cam þer him leste
 whan it cam him to purpos for to reste
 I trow he hadde pilke text' in mynde
 That alle þing' reþeyryng' to his kynde 608

Gladeþ himself þus sey men as I gesse	
Men louen of kynde newefangilnesse	
As briddes doon þat men in cage feede	
For þeigh þou night and day take of hem heede	612
And straw her cage faire and soft as silk	
And ȝeue hem sugre hony breed and mylk	
Ȝet right anon as his dore is vppe	
he with his feet wil sporne down his cuppe	616

And to þe wode

[*Eight leaves are here missing from the MS.*]

[*Brit. Mus. Harl. 7334 begins again, leaf 157.*]

lasse þan a þousand pound he wolde nought ^t haue	1224
Ne gladly for þat ^t somme he wolde not goon	
Aurilius wiþ blisful hert ^t anoon	
Answerde þus. fy on a þousand pound	
This wyde world which þat ^t men say is round	1228
I wold it ȝiue if ^t I were lord of ^t it/	
This bargeyn is ful dryue for we ben knyht	
Ȝe schal be payed trewly by my troupe /	
But ^t lokeþ now for necligence or slouþe	1232
Ȝe tarie vs heer no lenger þan to morwe /	
Nay quod þis clerk ^t haue her my faith to borwe	
To bed is goon aurilius whan him leste	
And wel neigh al night ^t he had his reste	1236

what' for his labour and his hope of blisse
 His woful hert' of penaunce had a lisse /
 vpon þe morwe whan þat' it was day
 To breteigne take þei þe righte way 1240
 Aurilius and þis magicien bisyde
 And ben descendid þer þay wol abyde
 And þis was as þese bookes me remembre
 The colde frosty seisoun of Decembre 1244
 Phebus wax old and hewed lyk' latoun
 That' in his hoote declinacioun
 Schon as þe burned gold with stremes bright'
 But' now in Capricorn a-down he light' 1248
 wher as he schon ful pale I dar wel sayn
 The bitter frostes with þe sleet' and rayn
 Destroyed haþ þe grene in euery 3erd
 Ianus sit' by þe fuyr wiþ double berd 1252
 And drynkeþ of his bugle horn þe wyn
 Biforn him stont' þe braun of toskid swyn
 And Nowel criep euery lusty man
 Aurilius in al þat' euer he can 1256
 Doþ to his maister chier and reuerence
 And peyneþ him to doon his diligence
 To bringen him out' of his peynes smerte
 Or wiþ a swerd þat' he wold slytte his herte 1260
 This subtil clerk' such rouþe had of þis man
 That' night' and day he spedep him þat' he can [*leaf 157, back*]
 To wayte a tyme of his conclusioun
 This is to say to make Illusioun 1264
 By such an apparence of iogelrie
 I can no termes of astrologie
 That' sche and euery wight' schold wene and saye
 That' of Breteygñ þe rokkes were a waye 1268
 Or elles þey sonken were vnder þe grounde
 So atte last' he haþ a tyme I-founde
 To make his iapes and his wrecchednesse /
 Of such a supersticious cursednesse / 1272

His tables tollitanes forþ he brought
 Ful wel corrected ne þer lakked nought
 Neiper his collect ne his expans yeeres
 Ne his rootes ne his oþer geeres / 1276
 As ben his centris & his argumentis
 And his proporcionels conuenientis
 For her equaciouns in euery þing /
 And by his þre speeres in his worching' 1280
 he knew ful wel how fer alluath was schoue
 For þe heed of þilke fixe aries aboue
 That in þe fourþe speere considred is
 Ful subtilly he calkild al þis 1284
 whan he had founde his firste mancioun
 He knew þe remenaunt by proporcoun
 And knew þe arisyng' of þis moone wel
 And in whos face and terme and euery del 1288
 And knew ful wel þe moones mancioun
 Acordaunt to his operacioun
 And knew also his other obseruaunces
 For suche illusiouns and suche meschaunces 1292
 As hethen folk vsed in þilke dayes
 For which no lenger maked he delayes
 But þurgh his magik' for a wike or tweye
 It semed þat þe rokkes were aweye 1296
 Aurilius which ȝet dispayred is
 wher he schal haue his loue or fare amys
 Awayteþ night and day on þis miracle
 And whan he knew þat þer was noon obstacle [*leaf 158*] 1300
 That voyded were þese rokkes euerich oon
 Doun to his maistres feet he fel anoon
 And sayd I wrecched woful aurilius
 Thanke ȝou lord and my lady Venus 1304
 That me han holpe fro my cares colde /
 And to þe temple his way forþ he hap holde
 wher as he knew he schold his lady se
 And whan he saugh his tyme anoon right he 1308

with dredful hert and with ful humble cheere
 Salued hap his owne lady deere
 My souerayn lady quod þis woful man
 whom I most drede and loue as I can 1312
 And loþest were of al þis world displese /
 Nere it þat I for 3ou haue such desese /
 That I most deye her at 3oure foot anoon
 Noughȝt wold I telle how me is wo bygoon 1316
 But certes ouþer most I dye or pleyne
 3e sleen me gulteles for verrey peyne
 But of my dep þoughȝt þat 3e haue no rouþe
 Auyseth 3ow or þat 3e breke 3our trouþe 1320
 Repenteh 3ow for þilke god aboue
 3e me sleen by cause þat I 3ou loue
 For madame wel 3e woot what/ 3e han highȝt
 Nat þat I chalenge eny þing of right 1324
 Of 3ow my souerayn lady but 3oure grace
 But in a gardyn 3onde at such a place
 3e wot right wel what 3e byhighte me
 And in myn hond 3our trouþe plichte 3e 1328
 To loue me best god woot/ 3e sayde so
 Al be þat I vnworthy am þerto
 Ma dame I speke it for thonour of 3ow
 More þan to saue myn hertes lif right now 1332
 I haue do so as 3e comaunded me
 And if 3e vouche sauȝt 3e may go se
 Doþ as 3ou list haue 3oure byheste in mynde
 For quykt or deed right þer 3e schul me fynde 1336
 In 3ow lip al to do me lyue or deye
 But wel I wot þe rokkes ben aweye [leaf 158, back]
 he takeþ his leue and he astoned stood
 In alle hir face nas oon drop of blood 1340
 Sche wend neuer haue be in such a trappe
 Allas quod sche þat euer þis schulde happe
 For wend I neuer by possibilite
 That such a monstre or merueyl mighte be / 1344

It is agayns þe proces of nature
 And hom sche goþ a sorwful creature
 For verray fere vnneþe may sche go
 Sche wepeþ wayleþ al a day or tuo 1348
 And swowneþ þat it rouþe was to see
 But why it was to no wight tolde sche
 For out of toune was goon aruegarius
 But to hir self sche spak/ and sayde þus 1352
 wiþ face pale and with ful sorwful chiere
 In hir compleynt as 3e schul after hiere
 ¶ Allas quod sche on þe fortune I pleyne
 That vnwar, wrapped me hast, in þy cheyne 1356
 Fro which tescape woot I no socour
 Saue oonly deþ or elles dishonour
 O n of þese tuo bihoueth me to chese /
 But napeles 3et haue I leuer leese 1360
 My lif þan of my body to haue schame
 Or knowe my-selue fals or lese my name /
 And with my deþ I may be quyt I-wys
 Hath þer not many a noble wyf er þis / 1364
 And many a mayden slayn hir-self allas
 Raper þan with her body doon trespas /
 3is certeynly lo stories beren witnes
 whan pritty tiraunt3 ful of cursednes 1368
 hadde slayn phidon in athenes atte fest
 Thay comaunded his doughtres to arest
 And bryngen hem biforn hem in despit
 And naked to fulfille her foule delyt 1372
 In her fadres blood þey made hem daunce
 vpon þe pauyment god 3eue hem meschaunce
 For which þese woful maydens ful of drede
 Raper þan þey wolde lese her maydenhede [leaf 159] 1376
 They priuely ben stert in to a welle /
 And drenched hemselfen as þe bookes telle
 ¶ They of mecene leet enquere and seeke /
 Of lacidomye fifty maydenes eeke / 1380

On which þay wolden doon her leccherie
 But^t was þer noon of^t al þat^t companye
 was slayn and wiþ a good entente
 Ches rap^r for to deye þan to assente 1384
 To ben oppressed of^t hir maydenhede
 why schuld I þan to deyen ben in drede
 ¶ Lo eek þe Tyraunt/ aristoclide
 That^t loued a mayden heet^t Stimphalides 1388
 whan þat hir father slayn was on a night
 vnto dyanes temple goþ sche right
 And hent^t þe ymage in hir hondes tuo
 Fro which ymage wold sche neuer go 1392
 No wight^t might^t of^t hit/ hir hondes race
 Til sche was slayn right^t in þe selue place
 Now siþ þat^t maydens hadde such despit
 To ben defouled with mannes foul delit 1396
 wel aught^t a wiþ rather hirself^t to sle
 Than be defouled as it thenkeþ me
 ¶ what^t schal I seyn of^t hasdrubaldes wyf^t
 That at Cartage byraft^t hir-self^t þe lyf^t 1400
 For whan sche saugh þat^t Romayns wan þe toun
 Sche took^t hir children alle and skipte a doun
 In to þe fuyr and ches rap^r to deye
 Than eny romayn dide hir vilonye 1404
 ¶ Haþ nought^t lucesse slayn hirself^t allas
 At Rome whanne sche oppressid was
 Of tarquyn for hir þought^t it^t was a schame /
 To lyuen whan sche hadde lost^t hir name 1408
 ¶ The seuen maydens of^t milifie also
 han slayn hemself^t for verray drede and wo
 Rap^r þan folk^t of^t Gawle hem schulde oppresse
 Mo þan a thousand stories as I gesse 1412
 Couþe I now telle as touching^t þis matiere
 ¶ whan habradace was slayn his wif^t so deere [loaf 159, back]
 hir-seluen slough and leet^t hir blood to glyde /
 In habradaces woundes deepe and wyde / 1416

And seyde my body atte leste way
 Ther schal no wight defoulen if I may
 what schold I mo ensamples her of sayn . . .
 Seppen so many han hemseluen slayn . . . 1420
 wel raper þan þey wolde defouled be /
 I wol conclude þat it is best for me
 To slen myself þan be defouled þus
 I wol be trewe vnto aruegarius 1424
 Or rather sle myself in som manere
 As dede Democionis dougter deere
 By cause sche wolde nought defouled be /
 O cedasus it is ful gret pite 1428
 To reden how þy doughteren dyed allas
 That slowe herself for suche maner caas
 As gret a pite was it or wel more
 The theban mayden þat for nichonore 1432
 hir-seluen slough right for such maner wo
 Anoper Theban mayden dede right so
 For oon of macidone had hir oppressed
 Sche with hire dep maydenhede redressed 1436
 what schal I sayn of Niceratis wif
 That for such caas biraft hir self hir lyf
 how trewe eek was cito alcebiades
 his loue. þat rather to dyen ches 1440
 Than for to suffre his body vnburied be
 Lo which a wif was alceste quod sche
 what saip omer of good penelope
 Al grece knowep of hir chastite 1444
 Par di of laodomya is writen þus
 That whan out of Troye was Protheselaus
 No lenger wol sche lyue after his day
 The same of noble porcia telle I may 1448
 wiþoute brutes kynde sche myȝt not lyue
 To whom sche had al hool hir herte ȝyue
 The parfyȝt wyfhod of artemesye
 honoured is purgh al þe Barbarie [leaf 160] 1452

O thena queen þy wifly chastite
 To alle wyues may a mirour be
 [. . . no gap in the MS.: these lines are
 known only in the Ellesmere MS.] 1456
 Thus playned Dorigen a day or tweye
 Purposyng^t euer þat^t sche wolde deye
 But^t napeles vpon þe thridde night^t
 hom cam arueragus þis worþy knight^t 1460
 And asked hir why þat^t sche wept^t so sore /
 And sche gan wepe euer lenger þe more
 Allas quod sche þat^t euer was I born
 Thus haue I sayd quod sche þus haue I sworn 1464
 And told him al as ȝe han herd biforn
 It^t nedep^t nought^t reherse it you no more
 ¶ This housbond wiþ glad chiere in good wise
 Answerd and sayde as I schal ȝou deuyse 1468
 Is þer aught^t elles Dorigen but þis
 Nay nay quod sche god me so rede & wis
 This is to moche and it were goddes wille
 ȝe wyf^t quod he let^t slepe þat^t may be stille 1472
 It^t may be wel peraunter ȝet^t to day
 ȝe schal ȝour troupe holden by my fay
 For god so wisly haue mercy on me
 I hadde wel leuer I-stekid for to be 1476
 For verray loue which I to ȝou haue /
 But^t if^t ȝe scholde ȝour troupe kepe and saue
 Troupe is þe heighest^t þing^t þat men may kepe
 But^t wiþ þat word he gan anoon to wepe 1480
 And sayde I ȝow forbede vp peyne of^t dep^t
 That^t neuer whil þe lasteth lyf^t or breth
 To no wight^t telle þou of^t þis auenture
 As I may best^t I wil my woo endure 1484
 Ne make no contenaunce of^t heuynesse
 þat^t folk^t of^t ȝou may deme harm or gesse
 And for he cleped a squyer and a mayde
 Goþ forþ anoon wiþ Dorigen he sayde 1488

And bryngeþ hir to such a place anoon	
Thay take her leue and on her wey þey gon	
But þay ne wiste why sche þider went	
He nolde no wight tellen his entent	[leaf 160, back] 1492
[.	
.	
.	
.	1496
. <i>no gap in the MS.: these lines are</i>	
. <i>known only in the Ellesmere MS.]</i>	
This squyer which þat hight aurelius	
On dorigen þat was so amerous	1500
Of aduenture happed hire to mete	
Amyd þe toun right in þe quyke strete	
As sche was boun to goon þe wey forþ-right	
Toward þe Gardyn þer as sche had hight	1504
And he was to þe gardynward also /	
For wel he spyed whan sche wolde go	
Out of hir hous to eny maner place	
But þus þay mette of aduenture or grace	1508
And he salueth hir with glad entent	
And askith hire whiderward sche went /	
And sche answered half as sche were mad	
vnto þe gardyn as myn housbond bad	1512
My troupe for to holde allas allas	
Aurilius gan wondren on þis caas	
And in his hert had gret compassioun	
Of hire and of hir lamentacioun	1516
And of Arueragus þe worþy knight	
That bad hir hold al þat sche hadde hight	
So loþ him was his wif schuld breke hir troupe	
And in his hert he caught of this gret roupe	1520
Consideryng þe best on euery syde	
That fro his lust zet were him leuer abyde	
Than doon so high a cheerlissch wrecchednesse	
Agayns fraunchis of alle gentilesce	1524

For which in fewe wordes sayd he þus
 Madame saith to 3our lord arueragus
 That' siþ I se his grete gentillesse
 To 3ou. and eek' I se wel 3our distresse 1528
 That' him were leuer haue schame and þat' were rouþe /
 Than 3e to me schulde breke 3oure troupe
 I haue wel leuer euer to suffre woo
 Than I departe þe loue bytwix 3ow tuo 1532
 I 3ow relese madame in to 3our hond
 Quyt' euery seurement and euery bond
 That' 3e han maad to me as her biforn
 Sith pilke tyme which þat' 3e were born [leaf 161] 1536
 My troupe I plight' I schal 3ow neuer repreue
 Of' no byhest' and her I take my leue
 As of' þe trewest' and þe beste wif
 That' euer 3it I knew in al my lyf' 1540
 But' euery wyf' be war of' hir byhest
 On Dorigen remembreþ atte lest
 Thus can a squyer doon a gentil dede
 As wel as can a knyght' wipouten drede 1544
 Sche þankeþ him vpon hir knees al bare /
 And hoom vnto hir housbond is sche fare /
 And told him al as 3e han herd me sayd
 And be 3e siker he was so wel a-payd 1548
 That' it were impossible me to write
 what schuld I lenger of' þis caas endite
 Arueragus and Dorigen his wif'
 In souereyn blisse leden forþ here lyf' 1552
 Neuer eft' ne was þer anger hem bytween
 he cherisscheþ hir as pough sche were a queen
 And sche was to him trewe for euermore /
 Of' þese tuo folk' 3e gete for me nomore / 1556
 ¶ Aurilius þat' his cost' hap al forlorn
 Curseþ þe tyme þat' euer he was born
 Allas quod he allas þat' I byhigh't
 Of' pured gold a thousand pound of' wight' 1560

vnto þis philosophre how schal I doo
 I se no more but þat I am for-doo
 Myn heritage moot I needes selle /
 And ben a begger her may I not duelle 1564
 And schamen al my kynrede in þis place
 But I of him may gete better grace
 But napeles I wol of him assay
 At certeyn dayes 3eer by 3er to pay 1568
 And þanke him of his grete curtesye
 My troupe wol I kepe I wol nouȝt lye
 with herte soor he goþ vn to his cofre
 And broughte gold vnto þis philosophre 1572
 The value of fyf hundred pound I gesse
 And him bysecheth of his gentilesce [leaf 161, back]
 To graunte him dayes of þe remenaunt
 And sayde maister I dar wel make auaunt 1576
 I fayled neuer of my troupe as 3it
 For sikerly my dettes schal be quyt
 Towardes 3ow how þat euer I fare
 To goon a begge in my kurtil bare 1580
 But wolde 3e vouche sauþ vpon seurte
 Tuo 3er or þre for to respite me
 Than were I wel for elles most I selle
 Myn heritage þer is nomore to telle 1584
 ¶ þis philosophre sobrelly answerde /
 And seyde þus whan he þese wordes herde
 Haue I not holden couenaunt vnto þe ?
 3is certes wel and trewely quod he / 1588
 Hastow nouȝt had þy lady as þe liketh
 No no quod he and sorwfully he sikeþ
 what was þe cause tel me if þou can
 Aurilius his tale anoon bygan 1592
 And told him al as 3e han herd bfore
 It needeþ nat to 3ou reherse it more
 he sayde arueragus of gentilesse
 had leuer dye in sorwe and in distresse 1596

Than þat his wyf were of hir troupe fals
 The sorwe of Dorigen he tolde him als
 how loþ hir was to ben a wikked wikked wyf
 And þat sche leuer had han lost hir lyf 1600
 And þat hir troupe sche swor þurgh Innocence
 Sche neuer erst hadde herd speke of apparence
 That made me han of hir so gret pyte
 By cause hir housebond sente hir to me 1604
 And right as frely sent I hir to him agayn
 þis is al and som þer is no more to sayn
 The philosopher answerde leue broþer
 Euerich of ȝow dede gentilly to oþer 1608
 Thow art a squyer and he is a knight
 But god forbede for his blisful might
 But if a clerk couþe doon as gentil dede
 As wel as eny of ȝou it is no drede [leaf 162] 1612
 Sire I relese þe þy þousond pound
 As þou right now were crope out of þe ground
 Ne neuer er now ne haddest knowen me
 For sire I wol not take a peny of þe 1616
 For al my craft ne nought for my trauayle /
 Thou hast y-payd wel for my vitayle /
 It is ynough and far wel haue good day
 And took his hors and forþ he goþ his way 1620
 ¶ Lordynges þis questioun wolde I axe now /
 which was þe moste free as þinketh ȝow
 Now telleþ me or þat I ferþer wende /
 I can no more my tale is at an ende / 1624
 ¶ Here endeth þe Frankeleynes tale

[No break in the MS.]

¶ And here bygynneth þe Secounde Nounes tale /

[*No gap in the MS.*]

[*THE PROEM.*]

(1)

T He minister and þe norice vnto vices which þat men clepe in english ydelnesse / The porter at þe gates is of delicis To eschiewe and by her contrary hire oppresse That is to say by leful besynesse / wel oughte we to do al oure entente Lest þat þe fend þurgh ydelnesse vs hente /	1 5 7
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(2)

For he þat wip his þousand cordes slye / Continuelly vs wayteth to byclappe/ whan he may man in ydelnes espye / He can so lightly cacche him in his trappe / Til þat a man be hent right by þe lappe / He is nouȝt war þe fend hap him in honde / wel oughte we wirche and ydelnes wipstonde /	8 12 14
--	-------------------------------

(3)

And þough men dredde neuer for to deye ȝet seen men wel by resoun douteles That ydelnes is roten sloggardye Of which þer comeþ neuer good encres And sin þat slouþ her holdeþ in a lees Oonly to sleep and for to ete and drynke And to deuoure al þat oþer swynke	15 19 21
--	--------------------------------

(4)

And for to put ^t vs from such ydelne	22
That ^t cause is of ^t so gret ^t confusioun	
I haue her doon my faithful busynes	[leaf 162, back]
After þe legende in translacioun	
Right ^t of ^t þis glorious lif ^t and passioun	26
Thou with þi garlond wrought ^t wiþ rose and lylve	
The mene I mayde and martir cecilie	28

(5)

And þou þat ^t flour of ^t <i>virgines</i> art alle / <i>Inuocatio ad mariam</i>	29
Of ^t whom þat ^t Bernard lust ^t so wel to write /	
To þe at ^t my bygynnyng ^t first ^t I calle	
Thou comfort ^t of ^t vs wrecches do me endite	
Thy maydenes deþ þat ^t whan þurgh hire merite	33
Theternal lif ^t and of ^t þe feend victorie	
As man may after reden in hir storie	35

(6)

Thou mayde and moder doughter of ^t þi sone /	36
Thow welle of ^t mercy synful soules cure	
In whom þat ^t god of ^t bountes chees to wone	
Thou humble and heyh ouer euery creature	
Thow nobelest ^t so ferforþ oure nature	40
That ^t nõ disdeyn þe maker had of ^t kynde /	
his sone in blood and fleissþ to cloþe and wynde /	42

(7)

Wipinne þe cloyster of ^t þi blisful sydes	43
Took ^t mannes schap þe eternal loue and pees	
That ^t of ^t þe trine compas lord and guyde is	
whom erþe and see and heuen out of ^t relees	
Ay herien and þou virgine wemmeles	47
Bar of ^t þy body and dwellest ^t mayden pure	
The creatour of ^t euery creature /	49

(8)

Assembled is in þy magnificence	50
with mercy goodnes and with such pitee	
That þou þat art þe soun of excellence	
But oonly helpist hem þat prayen þe	
But often tyme of þy benignite	54
Ful frely er þat men þin help biseche	
Thou gost biforn and art her lyfes leche /	56

(9)

Now help þou meke and blisful faire mayde /	57
Me flemed wrecche in þis desert of galle	
Thenk on þe womman canace þat sayde	
That whelpes ete some of þe crommes alle	
That from her lordes table ben I-falle /	61
And þough þat I vnworthy sone of Eue	[leaf 163]
Be synful / zett accepte my bileue	63

(10)

And for þat faith is deth wipouten werkis	64
So for to werken ȝiue me witt and space /	
That I be quit fro þennes þat most derk is	
O þou þat art so fair and ful of grace /	
Be myn aduocat in þat hihe place /	68
Ther as wipouten ende is songe Osanne	
Thou cristes moder douȝter deere of Anne	70

(11)

And of þi light my soule in prisoun light	71
That troubled is by þe contagioun	
Of my body and also by þe wight	
Of euerich lust and fals affeccoun	
O heuen of refuyt O sauacioun	75
Of hem þat ben in sorwe and in destresse /	
Now help for to my werk I wil me dresse /	77

(12)

3et ^t pray I 3ou þat reden þat I write /	78
For3eue me þat I doo no diligence	
This ilke story subtilly to endite	
For boþe haue I þe wordes and sentence	
Of him þat ^t at þe seintes reuerence	82
The story wroot ^t and folwen hir legende /	
And pray 3ow þat ^t 3e wol my werk ^t amende /	84

(13) [*THE TALE.*]

F ⁱ rst ^t wol I 3ow þe name of ^t seint Cecile	85
Expoune as men may in hir story se /	
It ^t is to say on englisch ^h heuenes lilie	
For pure chastenesse of ^t virginite	
Or for sche witnesse hadde of ^t honeste	89
And grene of ^t conscience and of ^t good fame /	
The soote sauour lilie was her name	91

(14)

O ^r cecile is to say þe way of ^t blynde /	92
For sche ensample was by way of ^t techynge	
Or elles Cecily as I writen fynde	
Is ioyned by a maner of ^t conioynyng	
Of ^t heuen and lya and here in figuryng	96
The heuen is sette for þought ^t of ^t holynesse /	
And lya for hir lastyng ^t besynesse /	98

(15)

Cecili may eek ^t be seyð in þis manere /	99
wantyng ^t of ^t blyndnes for hir grete light	[leaf 163, back]
Of ^t sapience and of ^t pilke þewes cleere /	
Or elles lo þis maydenes name bright	
Of ^t heuen and loos comes of ^t which by right ^t	103
Men might ^t hir wel þe heuen of ^t peple calle /	
Ensample of ^t goode and wise werkes alle	105

(16)

For leos peple in englissh is to say	106
And righ as men may in þe heuen see	
The sonne and moone and sterres euery way	
Right so men gostly in þis mayden free	
Seen of faip þe magnanimité /	110
And eek þe clernes hool of sapiencie	
And sondry werkes bright of excellence	112

(17)

And right so as þese filosofres wryte	113
That heuen is swyft and round and eek brennyngé	
Right so was faire Cecily þe whyte	
Ful swyft and besy euer in good werkyngé /	
And round and hool in good perseueryngé	117
And brennyngé euer in charite ful bright	
Now haue I ȝow declared what sche hight	119

(18)

This mayden bright Cecilie as hir lyf saip	120
was comen of Romyans and of noble kynde /	
And from hir cradel vp fostred in þe faip	
Of crist and bar his gospel in hir mynde	
Sche neuer cessed as I writen fynde	124
Of hire prayer and god to loue and drede	
Byseching him to kepe hir maydenhede	126

(19)

And whan þis mayde schuld vnto a man	127
Y-wedded be. þat was ful ȝong of age	
which þat I-cleped was walirian	
And day was comen of hir mariage	
Sche ful deuout and humble in hir currage	131
vnder hir robe of gold þat sat ful faire	
Hadde next hir fleissch I-clad hir in an heire	133

(20)

And whil þe organs made melodie / 134
 To god alloon in herte þus sang' sche /
 O lord my soule and eek' my body gye
 Vnwemmed . lest' þat I confounded be /
 And for his loue þat deyde vpon a tre [leaf 164] 138
 Euery secound or pridde day sche faste
 Ay biddyng' in hire orisouns ful faste / 140

(21)

The nyght' cam and to bedde most' sche goon 141
 with hir housbond as oft' is þe manere
 And priuely to him sche sayde anoon
 O swete and wel biloued spouse deere /
 Ther is a counseil and 3e wold it heere / 145
 which þat' right' fayn I wold vnto 3ou saye
 So that' 3e swere 3e schul it not' bywraye 147

(22)

Valirian gan fast/ vnto hir swere 148
 That' for no caas ne þing' þat' mighte be
 he scholde neuer mo bywreye hire
 And þanne at' erst' þus sayde sche
 I haue an aungel which þat' loueþ me 152
 That' wiþ gret' loue wher so I wake or slepe
 Is redy ay my body for to kepe 154

(23)

[. No gap in the MS.] 155
 Iff' 3e me touche or loue in vilonye
 he right' anoon wil sle 3ou wiþ þe dede
 And in 3oure 3ouþe þus schulde 3e dye
 And if' þat' 3e in clene loue me gye 159
 he wol 3ow loue as me for 3our clennesses /
 And schewe to 3ou his ioye and his brightnesse/ 161

(24)

Valirian corrected as god wolde /	162
Answerde agayn if I schal truste þe /	
Let me þat aungel se and him biholde	
And if þat it a verray aungel be /	
Than wol I doon as þou hast prayed me	166
And if þou loue anoþer man forsoþe	
Right wip þis swerd þan wol I slee þou boþe /	168

(25)

Cecilie answerd anoon right in þis wise	169
If þat þow list þe aungel schul ȝe see	
So that ȝe trowe on crist and þou baptise	
Gop forþ to Via apia quod sche /	
That fro þis toun ne stant but myles þre	173
And to þe pore folkes þat þer duelle	
Saith hem right þus. as þat I schal þou telle /	175

(26)

Telle hem I cecilie. þow vnto hem sent	176
To schewen þow þe good vrbā þe olde /	[leaf 164, back]
For secre needes and for good entente /	
And whan þat ȝe seint vrbā han byholde /	
Tel him þe wordes which þat I to þow tolde /	180
And whan þat he hap purged þou fro synne	
Than schul ȝe se þat aungel er ȝe twynne /	182

(27)

Valirian is to þe place y-goon	183
And right as him was taught by his lernynge	
He fond þis holy old vrbā anoon	
Among þe seyntes buriels lotynge	
And he anoon wipoute tarynge	187
Did his message and whan þat he it tolde	
vrbā for ioie his handes gan vp holde	189

(28)

The teres from his eyzen let ^t he falle	190
Almyȝty lord O. ihū crist ^t quod he /	
Sower of ^t chaste counseil herde of ^t vs alle	
The fruyt ^t of ^t pilke seed of ^t chastite	
That ^t þou hast ^t sowe to Cecilie tak ^t to þe	194
loo lik ^t a busy bee wipouten gyle /	
The serueþ ay þin owne þral Cecile	196

(29)

For pilke spouse þat ^t sche took ^t right ^t now	197
Ful lyk ^t a fers lyoun sche sendeþ here	
As meek ^t as euer was eny lamb to ȝow	
And wip þat ^t word anoon þer gan appere /	
An old man clad in white cloþes clere	201
That ^t had a book ^t wip lettres of ^t gold in honde /	
And gan to-forn Valirian to stonde /	203

(30)

Valirian as deed fyl doun for drede	204
whan he him say / and he him vp hente þo	
And on his book ^t right ^t þus he gan to rede /	
O lord. o feith oon god wipouten mo	
On cristendom and oon fader of ^t alle also	208
Abouen alle and ouer alle euery where	
[.]	210

(31)

.	211
.	
.	
.	
.	215
.	
. <i>no gap in the MS.</i>	
And pope vrban him cristened right ^t þere	217

(32)

Valirian goþ home and fint Cecilie wipinne his chambre with an aungel stonde / This aungel had of Roses and of lilie Corounes tuo þe which he bar in honde And first to Cecilie as I vnderstonde he ȝaft þat oon and after can he take / That oþer to valerian hir make	218 [leaf 165] 222 224
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(33)

Wip body clene and wip vnwemmed þought kepeþ ay wel þese corounes þre Fro paradys to ȝou I haue hem brought Ne neuer moo ne schul þey roten be Ne leese here soote sauour trusteþ me Ne neuer wight schal seen hem wip his ye But/ he be chast and hate vilonye	225 229 231
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(34)

And þou valirian for þou so soone Assentedist to good counseil also Say what þe list and þou schalt haue þi boone I haue a broþer quod Valirian þo That in þis world I loue no man so I pray ȝow þat my broþer may haue grace To knowe þe troupe as I doo in þis place	232 236 238
--	-----------------------------------

(35)

The aungel sayde god liketh þy request And boþe with þe palme of martirdom ȝe schullen come vnto his blisful feste / And with þat word tiburce his broþer com And whan þat he þe sauour vndernom which þat þe roses and þe lilies cast wipinne hir hert/ he gan to wondre fast /	239 243 245
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(36)

And sayde I wondre þis tyme of þe 3er 246
 whennes þat soote sauour comeþ so
 Of Rose and lilies þat I smelle her
 For þough I had hem in myn hondes tuo
 The sauour might in me no depper go 250
 The swete smel þat in myn hert I fynde
 Hath chaunged me al in anoþer kynde 252

(37)

Valirian sayd tuo corouns haue we 253
 Snow whyt and rose reed þat schinen cleere /
 whiche þat þine eyzen han no might to see /
 And þou smellest hem þurgh my prayere
 So schalt þou seen hem my lieue broþere deere 257
 If so be þou wilt wipouten slouþe
 Bilieuen aright and knowen verray trouthe / 259

(38)

Tyburce answerde says þou þus to me [leaf 165, back] 260
 In soþenes or in drem I herkne þis
 In dremes quod valirian han we be
 Vnto þis tyme broþer myn I-wys
 As now at erst in trouþe oure duellyngt is 264
 how wost þou þis quod tyburce and in what wise
 Quod valirian þat schal I þe deuyse 266

(39)

The aungel of god hap me trouþe y-taught 267
 which þou schalt seen if þat þou wilt reneye
 The ydols and be clene and elles nouȝt
 And of þe miracles of þese corones tweye
 Seynt ambrose in his prefes list to seye 271
 Solempnely þis noble doctour deere
 Comendeþ it and saiþ in þis maneere 273

(40)

The palme of martirdom for to receyue /	274
Seynt Cecilie fulfilled of goddes gifte	
The world and eek hir chamber gan sche weyue /	
witnes tyburces and Cecilies schrifte	
To whiche god of his bounte wolde schifte	278
Corounes tuo of floures wel smellynge	
And made his aungel home þe croune brynge	280

(41)

The mayde haþ brought þis men to blisse aboute /	281
The world haþ wist what it is worþ certeyn	
Deuocioun of chastite to loue	
Tho schewed him Cecilie al open and pleyn	
That alle ydoles nys but þing in veyn	285
For þay ben doumbe and þerto þey ben deue	
And chargeþ him his ydoles for to leue	287

(42)

Who so troweþ not þis a best he is	288
Quod tyburce if þat I schal not lye	
And sche gan kisse his brest þat herde þis	
And was ful glad he couþe trouþe espye	
This day I take þe for myn allye	292
Sayde þis blisful faire mayde deere /	
And after þat sche sayde as 3e may heere	294

(43)

Lo right so as þe loue of crist/ quod sche	295
Made me þy brotheres wyf right in þat wyse	
Anoon for myn allye heer take I þe /	
Sin þat þou wilt thyne ydoles despise	[leaf 166]
Go with þi broþer now and þe baptise	299
And make þe clene so þat þou mowe biholde	
The aungeles face of which þy broþer tolde	301

(44)

Tyburce answerde and sayde broþer dere/	302
First ^t tel me whider I schal and to what ^t man	
To whom quod he / com forth with good cheere /	
I wol þe lede vnto þe pope vrbā	
Til vrbā broþer myn quod valirian	306
Quod tyburce wilt ^t þou me þider lede /	
Me þenkeþ þat ^t it were a wonder dede /	308

(45)

Ne menist ^t þou nat ^t vrbā quod he þo	309
That ^t is so ofte dampned to be deed	
And woneþ in halkes alway to and fro	
And dar nouȝt ^t oones putte forþ his heed	
Men schold him brenne in a fuyr so reed	313
If ^t he were founde or if ^t men might ^t him spye	
And we also to bere him companye	315

(46)

And whil we seken þilke diuinite	316
That ^t is I-hyd in heuen priuely	
Algate I-brent ^t in þis world schal we be	
To whom Cecilie answerde bodyly	
Men mighten wel and skilfully	320
This lyf ^t to lese myn oughne dere brother	
If ^t þis were lyuyng ^t oonly and noon oþer	322

(47)

But ^t þer is better lif ^t in oþer place	323
That ^t neuer schal be lost ^t drede þe nouȝt ^t	
which goddes sone vs tolde þurgh his grace	
The fadres sone þat ^t alle þing ^t hath wrought	
And al þat ^t wrought ^t is wiþ a skilful þought ^t	327
The gost ^t þat fro þe fader gan procede	
haþ sowled hem wiþouten eny drede	329

(48)

By word and miracle hihe goddes sone 330
 whan he was in þis world declared heere /
 That þer was oþer lyf þer men may wone /
 To whom answerde Tyburce of suster deere
 Ne seydest þou right now in þis manere 334
 Ther nys but oo god. o .lord. in soþfastnesse
 And now of þre how maystow bere witnesse [H 166, bk] 336

(49)

That schal I telle quod sche er þat I go 337
 Right as a man haþ sapiences þre
 Memorie eyen and intellect also
 So in oo being in diuinite
 Thre persones may þer right wel be 341
 Tho gan sche him ful besily to preche /
 Of cristes come and of his peynes teche / 343

(50)

And many pointes of his passioun 344
 how goddes sone in þis world was wiþholde
 To doon mankynde pleyn remissioun
 That was I-bounde in synne and cares colde /
 Al þis þing sche vnto Tyburce tolde / 348
 And after þis thiburce in good entente
 wiþ valirian to pope vrban he wente / 350

(51)

That þanked god and wiþ glad hert and light 351
 he cristened him and made him in þat place /
 Parfyt in his lernynge goddes knyght
 And after þis thiburce gat such grace /
 That every day he say in tyme and space / 355
 The aungel of god and euery maner boone /
 That he god asked / it were sped ful soone 357

(52)

It were ful hard by ordre for to sayne 358
 how many wondres Ihe for hem wroughte
 But atte last to tellen schort and playne .
 The sergeant³ of þe toun of Rome hem soughte
 And hem byform almache þe prefect broughte 362
 which hem apposed and knew alle here entente
 And to þe ymage of Iubiter hem sente 364

(53)

And saide who-so wil not sacrifice 365
 Swope of his heued þis my sentence heere
 Anoon þese martires þat I 3ou deuyse
 Oon maximus þat was an officere /
 Of þe prefectes and his counceilere / 369
 hem hent. and whan he forþ þe seyntes ladde
 him self he wept for pite þat he hadde / 371

(54)

Whan maximus had herd þe seintes lore 372
 he gat him of his tormentoures leue
 And bad hem to his hous wipouten more [leaf 167]
 And with her preching er þat it were eue
 Thay gonne fro þe tormentoures to reue 376
 And fro maxime and fro his folk echoone
 The false faith to trowe in god alloone 378

(55)

Cecilie cam whan it was waxen night 379
 with prestis þat hem cristenid alle in feere /
 And afterward whan day was waxen light
 Cecilie hem sayde with a ful stedefast chere /
 Now cristes owne kny³tes leef and deere 383
 Cast al away þe werkes of derknes
 And armith 3ou in armur of brightnes 385

(56)

3e han forsoþe y-doon a greet batayle / 386
 3oure cours is doon 3oure faith han 3e conserved
 Gop to þe coroun of lyf þat may not fayle /
 The rightful iugge which þat 3e han serued
 Schal 3eue it 3ow as 3e han it deserued 390
 And whan þis þing was sayd as I deuyse
 Men ladde hem forþ to doon þe sacrifice / 392

(57)

But/ whan þey were to þe place y-brouzt 393
 To telle schortly þe conclusioun
 They nolde encense ne sacrifice right nough
 But on her knees þey setten hem adoun
 wip humble hert and sad deuocioun 397
 And leften boþe her heedes in þe place
 here soules wenten to þe king of grace / 399

(58)

This maximus þat say þis king betyde / 400
 wip pitous teeres tolde it anon right
 That he here soules saugh to heuen glyde
 with aungels ful of clernes and of light
 And with his word conuerted many a wight 404
 For which almachius dede him so bete
 with whippes of leed til he his lif gan lete / 406

(59)

Cecilie him took and buried him anon 407
 By Thiburce and valirian softly
 wipinne hire berieng place vnder þe stoon
 And after þis almachius hastily
 Bad his ministres fecchen openly 411
 Cecilie. so þat sche might in his presence [leaf 167, back]
 Doon sacrifice and Iubiter encense / 413

(60)

But þey conuerted at hir wise lore 414
 wepten ful sore and ȝauen ful credence
 Vnto hir word and cryden more and more
 Crist goddes sone wiþouten difference
 Is verray god þis is al oure sentence / 418
 That hap so good a *seruaunt* him to *serue*
 This with oon vois we trowen þough we sterue 420

(61)

Almachius þat herd of þis doynge 421
 Bad fecchen Cecilie þat he might hir se
 And alþer first lo þis was his axinge
 what maner womman art þou quod he
 I am a gentil womman born quod sche 425
 I axe þe quod he though þe it greue
 Of þi religioun and of þi byleue / 427

(62)

Ȝe han bygonne ȝour questioun folily 428
 Quod sche þat wolden tuo answers conclude /
 In oo demaunde ȝe axen lewedly
 Almache answerde to þat similitude
 Of whens comþ þin answering so rude 432
 Of whens quod sche whan sche was I-freynd
 Of conscience and good faith vnfeyned 434

(63)

Almachius sayde takest þou noon heede / 435
 Of my power and sche answerde him þis /
 Ȝoure might quod sche ful litel is to drede /
 For euery mortal mannes power nys
 But lyk a bladder ful of wynd I-wis 439
 For with a nedeles poynt what it is blowe /
 May al þe best of it be layd ful lowe / 441

(64)

Ful wrongfully bygan þou quod he / 442
 And 3et^t in wrong^t is þy perseueraunce
 wostow nough how oure mighty princes fre
 han þus comaunded and maad ordinaunce
 That euery cristen wight^t schal haue penaunce / 446
 But^t if^t þat^t he his cristendom wipseye
 And goon al quyt^t if^t he wil it reneye / 448

(65)

¶ 3oure princes erre as 3oure nobleye doþ 449
 Quop þo Cecilie and with a wood sentence / [leaf 108]
 3e make vs gulty and it is nou3t^t soþ
 For 3e þat^t knowen wel oure Innocence
 For as moche as we doon reuerence / 453
 To crist^t and for we bere a cristen name
 3e putten on vs a crym and eek^t a blame / 455

(66)

But^t we þat^t knowen pilke name so 456
 For vertuous we may it not^t wipseye
 Almache sayde cheese oon of^t þese tuo
 Do sacrifice and cristendom reneye
 þat^t þou mow now eschafen by þat^t weye 460
 At^t which þe holy blisful faire mayde /
 Gan for to laughe and to þe Iugge sayde / 462

(67)

O Iugge confus in þis nycete 463
 wilt^t þou þat I refuse Innocence
 To make me a wikked wight^t quod sche /
 lo he dissimuleþ heer in audience
 he starith and woodith in his aduertence 467
 To whom almachius sayde vnsely wrecche /
 Ne wostow nough^t how fer my might^t may strecche 469

(68)

Han nouȝt^t our mighty princes to me y-ziuen 470
 3e bothe power and eek^t auctorite
 To make folk^t to deyen or to lyuen
 why spekestow so proudly þan to me
 I speke not^t but^t stedefastly quod sche 474
 Nought^t proudly for I say as for my syde /
 we haten deedly pilke vice of^t pryde 476

(69)

And if þou drede nouȝt a soþ to heere 477
 Than wol I schewe al openly by right
 That^t þou hast^t maad a ful greet^t lesyng^t heere
 Thou saist^t þy princes han I-ziue þe might^t
 Boþe for to sleen and eek^t to quike a wight^t 481
 Thou þat ne maist^t but^t oonly lif^t byreue
 Thou hast^t noon oþer power ne no leue 483

(70)

But^t þou maist^t sayn þi princes han þe maked 484
 Minister of^t deþ for if^t þou speke of^t moo
 Thow liest^t for þy power is ful naked
 Do way þy lewednes sayd almachius þo
 And do sacrifice to oure goddes er þou go [leaf 168, back] 488
 I recche nouȝt^t what^t wrong^t þat þou me profre /
 For I can suffre it as a philosopre 490

(71)

But^t pilke wronges may I not^t endure 491
 That^t þou spekis of^t oure goddis her quod he
 Cecilie answered. O nice creature
 Thou saydest^t no word sins þou spak^t to me /
 That^t I ne knew þer-wiþ þy nicete / 495
 And þat^t þou were in euery maner wise /
 A lewed officer a vein Iustise/ 497

(72)

Ther lakketh no þing to þin outer eyen 498
 That þou art blynd for þing þat we seen alle
 That it is stoon þat men may wel asprien /
 That ilke stoon a god þou wilt it calle /
 I rede þe let þin hond vpon it falle / 502
 And tast it wel and stoon þou schalt it fynde
 Siþ þat þou seest / not wiþ þin eyzen blynde 504

(73)

IT is a schame þat þe poeple schal 505
 So scorne þe and laughe at þi folye /
 For comunly men woot it wel ouer al
 That mighty god is in his heuen hye
 And þese ymages wel þou mayst espie 509
 To þe ne to himself may nought profyte
 For in effect. þey ben nouȝt worþ a myte 511

(74)

Thise wordes and such oþer sayde sche 512
 And he wax wroþ and bad men schold hir lede
 hom to hir hous / and in hir hous quod he /
 Brenne hir right in a bath of flammes rede /
 And as he bad right so was doon þe dede / 516
 For in a bath þay gonne hir faste schetten
 And nyght and day great fuyr þey vnder betten 518

(75)

The longe night and eek a day also 519
 For al þe fuyr and eek þe bapes hete
 Sche sat al cold and felte of no woo
 Hit made hir not. oon drope for to swete
 But in þat bath hir lif sche moste lete 523
 For he almachius with ful wikke entente
 To sleen hir in þe bath his sondes sente 525

(76)

Thre strokes in þe nek he smot^t hir þo [leaf 169] 526
 The tormentour but^t for no maner chaunce /
 he might^t nouȝt^t smyte hir faire necke a-tuo /
 And for þer was þat^t tyme an ordinaunce
 That^t no man scholde do man such penaunce 530
 The ferþe strok^t to smyten softe or sore /
 This tormentour ne dorste do no more / 532

(77)

But^t half^t deed with hir nekke coruen there 533
 he laft^t hir lye and on his way he went
 The cristen folk^t which þat^t about^t hir were /
 wiþ scheetes han þe body ful faire y-hent
 þre dayes lyued sche in þis torment^t 537
 And neuer cessed hem þe faith to teche /
 That^t sche had suffred hem sche gan to preche 539

(78)

And hem sche ȝaf^t hir moebles and hir þing^t 540
 And to þe pope Vrban bytook^t hem þo /
 And sayd I axe þis of heuen kyng^t
 To haue respit^t þre dayes and no mo
 To recomende to ȝow er þat^t I go 544
 These soules lo and þat^t I mighte do wirche
 heer of myn hous perpetuely a chirche 546

(79)

Seynt^t vrban wiþ his Deken^tes priuely 547
 The body fette and buried it by nighte /
 Among^t his oþer seyntes honestely
 hir hous þe chirch of^t seynt^t Cecily ȝit highte
 Seynt^t vrban halwed it as he wel mighte 551
 In which in to þis day in noble wyse
 Men doon to crist^t and to his seint^t seruise / 553
 Here endeth þe secounde Nonne hir tale of^t þe lif^t of seint
 Cecilie

[No break in the MS.]

And here bygynneth þe tale of þe Chanouns ȝeman

¶ *prologus*

Whan ended was þe lif/ of seynt Cecile

Er we fully had riden fyue myle

At/ Boughtoun vnder blee vs gan atake

A man þat cloped was in cloþes blake 557

And vnder þat he had a whit surplice

his hakeney þat was a pomely grice

So swete þat it wonder was to se

It semed he hadde priked myles þre / 561

The hors eek þat his ȝyman rood vpon [leaf 169, back]

So swette þat vnneþes might he goon

Aboute þe peytrel stood þe foom ful hye

he was of foom as flekked as a pye 565

A male tweyfold on his croper lay

It semed þat he caried litel array

And light for somer rood þis worþy man

And in myn herte wondren I bigan 569

what þat he was til þat I vnderstood

how þat his cloke was sowed vnto his hood

For which whan I long had auysed me /

I demed him som chanoun for to be 573

his hat heng at his bak down by a laas

For he had riden more þan trot or paas /

He had I-pryked lik as he were wood

A cloote leef he had vnder his hood 577

For swoot and for to kepe his heed from hete

But it was ioye for to se him swete

His forhed dropped as a stillatorie

were ful of plantayn and of peritorie 581

And whanne þat^t he was com he gan to crie
 God saue quod he þis ioly compaignye/
 Fast^t haue I priked quod he for 3our sake /
 By cause þat^t I wolde 3ou atake 585
 To ryden in þis mery companye /
 his 3eman eek^t was ful of^t curtesye /
 He seid sires now in þe morwe tyde /
 Out^t of^t 3our ostelry I saugh 3ou ryde / 589
 And warned heer my lord and my souerayn
 which þat^t to ryden with 3ow is ful fayn
 For his desport/ he loueth daliaunce
 Frend for þy warnyng^t god 3eue þe good chaunce 593
 Sayde oure host^t for certes it wolde seme
 Thy lord were wys and so I may wel deme
 he is ful iocound also dar I leye
 Can he ough^t telle a mery tale or tweye 597
 with which he glade may þis companye
 who sire my lord / 3e 3e / wiþoute lye /
 He can of^t merthe and eek^t of Iolite [leaf 170]
 Not^t but^t ynough also sir trusteþ me 601
 And 3e him knewe / as wel as do I
 3e wolde wonder how wel and þriftily
 he couþe werke and þat^t in sondry wise
 he haþ take on him many sondry emprise / 605
 which were ful hard for eny þat^t is heere
 To bringe aboute but^t þay of^t him it^t leere /
 As homely as he ryt^t amonges 3ow
 If^t 3e him knewe it^t wolde be 3oure prow 609
 3e nolde nough^t forgon his aqueyntaunce
 For moche good I dar lay in balaunce
 Al þat^t haue in my possessioun
 he is a man of^t heigh discreditioun 613
 I warne 3ow wel he is a passyng^t man
 ¶ wel quod our oost/ I pray þe tel me þan
 Is he a clerk / or noon tel what^t he is
 Nay he is gretter þan a clerk^t I-wis^t 617

Sayde þe ȝyman and in wordes fewe /
 Ost' and of' his craft' somewhat' I wil ȝou schewe
 I say my lord can such subtilite
 But' al his craft' ȝe may nought' wite of me / 621
 And somewhat' helpe I ȝit to his worchyng
 That' al þis ground on which we ben ridyng
 Til þat' we comen ro Caunterbury toun
 he coupe al clene turnen vp so doun 625
 And paue it al of' siluer and of' gold
 And whan þis ȝeman hadde þus I-told
 vnto oure oost' / he seyde benedicite
 This is wonder merueylous to me 629
 Syn þat þis lord is of' so heigh prudence
 By cause of' which men schuld him reuerence /
 That' of' his worchip rekkeþ he so lite
 his ouer slop it' is not' worþ a myte 633
 As in effect/ to him so mot / I go
 It' is al bawdy and to-tore also
 why is þi lord so slottisch I þe preye
 And is of' power better clopis to beye / 637
 If' þat' his dede accorde with þy speche / [leaf 170, back]
 Telle me þat' and þat' I þe biseche /
 ¶ why quod þis ȝyman / wher-to axe ȝe me
 God help me so for he schal neuer þe 641
 But' I wol nought' avowe þat' I say
 And þerfor kep it secre I ȝou pray
 he is to wys in faith as I bileue
 That' at' is ouer-don it wil nouȝt' preue / 645
 a right'. as clerkes sein it is a vice
 wherfore in þat' I holde him lewed and nyce
 For whan a man haþ ouer greet a witte,
 Ful ofte him happeth to mysven itte 649
 So doth my lord and þat' me greueþ sore
 God it amende I can say now nomore
 Ther-of' no fors good ȝeman quod oure Ost'
 Syn of' þe connyng' of' þi lord þou wost' 653

Tel how he doþ I pray þe hertily
 Sin þat^t he is so crafty and so sly
 wher duellen 3e if^t it^t to telle be
 In þe subarbes of^t a toun quod he / 657
 lurking^t in hirnes and in lanes blynde
 wher as þese robbours and þeues by kynde /
 holden here prive ferful residence
 As þay þat^t dor nou3^t schewen her presence / 661
 So faren we if^t I schal say þe soþe
 Now quod oure ost^t 3it^t let^t me talke toþe
 why artow discoloured on þy face
 Peter quod he god 3iue it harde grace 665
 I am so vsed in þe fuyr to blowe
 That^t it haþ chaunged my colour I trowe
 I am not^t wont^t in no mirour to prie
 But swynke sore and lerne to multiplie 669
 we blondren euer and pouren in þe fuyr
 And for al þat^t we faile of^t oure desir
 For euer we lacken oure conclusioun
 To moche folk^t we ben illusioun 673
 And borwe gold be it a pound or tuo
 Or ten or twelue or many *sommes* mo
 And make hem wenen atte leste weye [leaf 171]
 That^t of^t a pound we conne make tweye 677
 3it is it fals and ay we han good hope
 It^t for to doon and after it^t we grope /
 But^t þat^t science is so fer vs biforn
 we mowen nou3^t al þough we had it sworn 681
 It^t ouertake it slyt^t away so fast^t
 It^t wol vs make beggers atte last^t
Whil þis 3eman was þus in his talkyng^t
 This chanoun drough him ner and herd al þing^t 685
 which þat^t þis 3iman spak^t for suspeccioun
 Of^t mennes speche euer hadde þis chanoun
 For Catoun saiþ þat^t he þat gulty is
 Demeþ al þing^t be spoke of^t him I-wis 689

By cause of þat / he gan so neigh to drawe
 his ȝeman þat he herde al his sawe /
 And þus he sayd vnto his ȝeman þo
 Hold now þi pees and spek' no wordes mo 693
 For if þou do þou schalt' it deere abyen
 Thow slaundrest' me here in þis companye
 And eek discourerst' þat þou schuldest hide
 Ȝe quod oure ost tel on what so bytyde 697
 Of alle þis thretyng' recche þe nought a myte
 In faip quod he no more do I but lite
 And whan þis chanoun seiþ it wold not be
 But his ȝeman wold telle his priuete 701
 He fledde a way for verray sorwe and schame
 A quod þis ȝeman her schal arise game
 Al þat I can anoon now wol I telle
 Sin he is goon þe foule feend him quelle 705
 For neuer her after wol I wiþ him meete
 For peny ne for pound I wol byheete
 he þat me broughte first' vnto þat game
 Er þat he deye sorwe haue he and schame 709
 For it is earnest' to me by my fayth
 That fele I wel what' so eny man saith
 And ȝet' for al my smert' and al my greif
 For al my sorwe and labour and mescheef' 713
 I couþe neuer leue it in no wise [leaf 171, back]
 Now wolde god my wyt' mighte suffise
 To tellen al þat longeþ to þat art/
 But napeles ȝet' wil I telle ȝou part' 717
 Sin þat my lord is goon I wol nought' spare
 Such þing' al þat I knowe I wol declare

[No break in the MS.]

[THE PREAMBLE.]

¶ Narrat'

With þis Chanoun I duelled haue seuen 3er
 And of his science am I neuer þe ner 721
 Al þat I hadde I haue lost þer by
 And god wot/ so haþ many mo þan I /
 Ther I was wont to be right freisch and gay
 Of cloþing and of oþer good array / 725
 Now may I were an hose vpon myn heed
 And where my colour was boþe freissch and reed
 Now it is wan and of a leden hewe
 who-so it vseþ sore schal he rewe 729
 And of my swynk 3et blended is myn ye
 Lo such auauntage it is to multiplie
 That slydyng science had me made so bare /
 That I haue no good wher þat euer I fare 733
 And 3it I am endetted so þer by
 Of gold I haue borwed trewely
 That whil I lyue I schal it quite neuer
 lat euery man be war by me for euer 737
 what maner man þat castþ him þerto
 If he continue I holde his þrift I-do
 For so help me god þer by schal he not wyne
 But empte his purs and make his wittes þynne 741
 And whan he þurgh his madnes and folye /
 Haþ lost his owne good in ieupardie /
 Than he exciteþ oþer men þer-to
 To leese her good as he himself haþ do 745
 For vnto schrewes ioye it is and ese /
 To haue here felawes in peyne and desese /

Thus was I oones lerned of a clerk /
 Of þat no charge I wol speke of oure werk 749
 whan we ben þer as we schul exercise
 Oure eluyssh craft we seme wonder wyse
 Oure termes ben so clergeal and queynte / [leaf 172]
 I blowe þe fuyr til þat/ myn herte feynte / 753
 what schulde I telle ech *proporcioun*
 Of þinges which þat we werke vp and down
 As an fyue or six ounces may wel be /
 Of siluer or som oþer quantite 757
 And besy me to telle ȝow þe names
 Of Orpiment brent boaes yren squames
 That in to poudre grounden ben ful smal
 And in an erthen pot/ how þat put is al 761
 And salt y-put in and also paupere
 Biforn these poudres þat I speke of heere
 And wel I-couered wiþ a lamp of glas /
 And of moche oþer þing what þat þer was 765
 And of þe pot. and glas enlutyng
 That of þe aier mighte passe no þing
 And of þe esy fuyr and smert also
 which þat was maad and of þe care and wo 769
 That we hadde in oure matiers sublymynge
 And amalgamyng and calcenynge
 Of quyksiluer y-clept mercury crude /
 For alle oure sleighes we can nought conclude / 773
 Oure orpiment and sublyment mercurie
 Oure grounde litarge / eek on þe porfurye
 Of ech of þese of ounces a certayn
 Nat helpeþ vs oure labour is in vayn 777
 Ne eek oure spirites ascencioun
 Ne eek our matiers þat lyn al fix a doun
 Mowe in oure werkyng vs no þing auayle
 For lost is al oure labour and trauayle 781
 And al þe cost on twenty deuelway
 Is lost also which we vpon it lay

Ther is also ful many anoþer þing^t
 That is to oure craft^t appertenynge^t 785
 Though I by ordre hem here reherse ne can
 By cause þat^t I am a lewed man
 3et^t wil I telle hem as þey come to mynde /
 Though I ne conne nought^t sette hem in her kynde / 789
 As bol armoniak^t verdegres boras [leaf 172, back]
 And sondry vessels maad of erþe and glas
 Oure vrnals and oure descensories
 Viols Croslets . and sublimatories 793
 Concurbites and alembikes eeke
 And opere suche deere ynough a leeke
 Nat^t needith it^t to rehersen hem alle
 watres rubisyng^t and boles galle 797
 Arsnek^t Sal armoniak^t and brimstoon
 And herbes coupe I telle eek^t many oon
 As Egrimoigne Valirian and lunarie,
 And opere suche if^t þat me list^t to tarie / 801
 Oure lampes brennyng^t boþe night^t and day
 To bringe aboute oure craft^t if^t þat^t we may
 Oure fournies¹ eek^t of^t Calcinacioun [1 or fourmes]
 And of^t watres albificacioun 805
 Vnslekked lym salt^t and glayre of^t an ey
 Poudres dyuers aissches dong^t pisse and cley
 Cered poketts . Sal petre vitriole
 And dyuers fuyres maad of^t woode and cole / 809
 Salt^t tartre . alcaly and salt^t preparat^t
 And combust matieres . and coagulat^t
 Cley maad wiþ hors or mannes her and oyle
 Of^t tartre alym . glas . berm wort^t and argoyle 813
 Resalgar and oure matiers enbibing^t
 And eek^t of^t oure matiers encorporing^t
 And siluer citrinacioun
 Oure cementynge and fermentacioun 817
 Oure yngottes testes and many mo
 I wol 3ou telle as was me taught^t also

The foure spiritz and þe bodies seuen
 By ordre as ofte herd I my lord neuen 821
 The firste spirit^t quyksiluer called is
 The secound orpiment^t þe þridde I-wis
 Sal armoniac^t. and þe ferþe bremstoon
 The bodies seuen eek^t lo hem heer anoon 825
 Sol gold is and luna siluer we þrepe
 Mars yren. Mercurie quyksiluer we clepe
 Saturnus leed and Iubiter is tyn [leaf 173]
 And Venus coper by my fader kyn 829
 This cursed craft^t who so wol exercise
 he schal no good han þat^t may him suffise /
 For al þe good he spendeþ þer aboute
 he lese schal þer of^t haue I no doute / 833
 who-so þat^t list/ outen his folye
 let^t him come forþ and lerne multiplie
 And euery man that^t hap ought^t in his cofre
 Let^t him appiere and wexe a filosofre 837
 Ascauns þat^t craft^t is so light^t to lere /
 Nay nay god wot^t al be he monk^t or frere
 Prest^t Chanoun or eny oþer wight^t
 Though he sit^t at^t his book^t boþe day and night 841
 In lernyng^t of^t þis eluysch nice lore
 Al is in vayn and parde moche more
 Is to lerne a lewed man þis subtilte
 Fy spek^t not^t þerof^t. for it^t it^t wil not^t be 845
 Al couþe he letterure or couþe he noon
 As in effect^t he schal fynd it al oon
 For boþe tuo by my sauacioun
 Concluden in multiplicacioun 849
 I-liche wel whan þay han al y-do /
 This is to sayn þay fayle boþe tuo
 3et^t forȝat^t I to moche rehersayle
 Of^t watres corosif^t and of^t lymayle 853
 And of^t bodyes mollificacioun
 And also of^t here enduracioun

Oyles ablucioun and metal fusible /
 To tellen al wold passen eny bible 857
 That owher is wherfore as for þe best
 Of alle þese names now wil I me rest/
 For as I trowe I haue 3ow told ynowe
 To reyse a feend al loke he neuer so rowe / 861
 A nay let be þy philosophre stoon
 Elixir clept. we sechen fast echoon
 For had we him þan were we syker ynough
 But vnto god of heuen I make avow 865
 For al oure craft whan we han al y-do [leaf 173, back]
 And al oure sleight he wol not come vs to
 He hap I-made vs spende moche good
 For sorwe of which almost we wexen wood 869
 But þat good hope crepeþ in oure hert
 Supposing euer þough we sore smerte /
 To ben relieued by him afterward
 Supposing and hope is scharp and hard 873
 I warne 3ou wel it is to seken euer
 That future temps hap made men disseuere
 In trust þerof from al þat euer þey hadde /
 3et of þat art þay conne nou3t wexe sadde / 877
 For vnto hem it is a bitter swete
 So semeþ it for nad þay but a scheete
 which þay mighte wrappe hem in a night
 And a bak to walke Inne by day lighþ 881
 They wolde hem selle and spenden on þis craft
 That can nought stinte til no þing be laft
 And euermore wher þat euer þey goon
 Men may hem knowe by smel of bremston 885
 For al þe world þay stynken as a goot
 her sauour is so rammysch and so hoot
 That þough a man fro hem a myle be /
 The sauour wol infecte him trusteþ me 889
 Lo þus by smellyng and by þredbare array
 If þat men list þis folk þey knowe may /

And if a man wol aske hem priuely
 why þay ben cloþed so vnþriftily 893
 Right anoon þay rounen in his eere /
 And say if þat þay espied were
 Men wold hem slee by cause of here science
 Lo þus þis folk bytrayen Innocence 897
 Passe ouer þis I go my tale vnto
 Er þan þe pot be on þe fuyr y-do
 Of metals with a certeyn quantite
 My lord hem tempred and no man but he 901
 Now he is goon I dar say boldely
 For as men sayn he can doon craftily
 Algate I wot wel he haþ such a name [leaf 174]
 And 3et ful ofte he renneþ in blame 905
 ¶ And wite 3e how ful ofte it happeþ so
 The pot tobrekeþ and far wel al is goo
 These metals been of so gret violence /
 Oure walles may not make hem resistance 909
 But if þay were wrought of lym and stoon
 Thay persen so and þurgh þe wal þay goon
 And some of hem synken in to þe grounde/
 Thus haue we lost by tymes many a pounce 913
 And some are skatered al þe floor aboute
 Some lepe in to þe roof wiþouten doute
 Though þat þe feend nought in oure sight him schewe /
 I trowe þat he wiþ vs be þat schrewe / 917
 In helle wher þat he is lord and sire
 Nis þer no more woo ne anger ne Ire /
 whan þat oure pot is broke as I haue sayd
 Euery man chyt and halt him euel a payd 921
 Som sayd it was long on þe fuyr-makyng
 Some sayde nay it was on þe blowyng
 Than was I ferd for þat was myn office /
 Straw quod þe þridde / 3e been lewed and nyce 925
 It was nouȝt tempred as it oughte be /
 Nay quod þe ferþe stynt and herkne me /

By cause oure fuyr was nought^t y-maad of^t Beech
 That^t is þe cause and oþer noon so þeech 929
 I can not^t telle wher-on it^t was long^t
 But^t wel I woot gret stryf^t is vs among^t
 What^t quod my lord þer is no more to doone /
 Of þese periles I wol be war eft^t soone / 933
 I am right^t siker þat^t þe pot^t was crased
 Be as be may be ȝe no þing^t amased
 As vsage is let^t swoope þe floor as swiþe
 Pluk^t vp ȝour hertes and beþ glad and bliþe 937
 The mullok^t on an heep I-swoped was
 And on þe floor y-cast^t a caneuas
 And al þis mulloc^t in a syue I-þrowe /
 And sifted and y-plukked many a þrowe 941
 Par de quod oon somewhat^t of^t oure metal [leaf 174, back]
 Ȝet^t is þer heer þough þat^t we haue nouȝt^t al
 And þough þis þing^t myshapped haþ a now
 Anoþer tyme it may be wel ynow 945
 Vs moste putte oure good in aduenture
 A marchaun / par de may not^t ay endure
 Trusteþ me wel in his prosperite
 Somtyme his good is drowned in þe see / 949
 And som tyme comeþ it^t sauf^t vn-to þe londe /
 Pees quod my lord þe nexte tyme I wol fonde /
 To bringe oure craft^t al in anoþer plyte
 And but^t I do sire let^t me haue þe wyte 953
 Ther was defaute in som what^t wel I woot^t
 Anoþer sayde þe fuyr was ouer hoot^t
 But^t be it hoot^t or cold I dar say þis
 That^t we concluden euermor amys 957
 we faile of^t þat^t which þat^t we wolden haue
 And in oure madnesse euermore we raue
 And whan we ben togideres euerichon
 Eueriche man semeþ a Salamon 961
 But^t al þing^t which þat^t schineþ as þe gold /
 Is nouȝt^t gold as þat^t I haue herd told

Ne euery appel þat is fair at ye	
Ne is not good what so men clappe or crye	965
Right so lo fareth it amonges vs	
He þat semeþ wisest by Iesus	
Is most fool whan it/ comeþ to þe preef	
And he þat semeth trewest is a þeef	969
That schul 3e knowe er þa I fro 3ow wende /	
By þat I of my tale haue maad an ende /	

[*No break in the MS.*]

[THE TALE.]

Ther is a chanoun of religioun
 Amonges vs wold infecte al a toun 973
 Though it as gret were as was Niniue
 Rome alisaundre troye and oper þre /
 his sleight and his infinite falsnesse /
 Ther couþe no man writen as I gesse 977
 Though þat he mighte lyuen a þousand þeer
 Of al þis world of falsheed nys his peer
 For in his termes he wol him so wynde [leaf 175]
 And speke his wordes in so sleygh a kynde 981
 whan he comune schal wiþ eny wight
 That he wil make him dote anoon right
 But it a feend be as himseluen is
 Ful many a man hath he bygiled er this 985
 And wol if þat he lyue may a while /
 And ȝet men ryde and goon ful many a myle /
 Him for to seeke and haue his aqueintaunce /
 Nought knowyng of his false gouernaunce 989
 And if ȝow list to ȝeue me audience
 I wol it telle here in ȝoure presence
 But worschipful chanouns religious
 Ne demeþ nought þat I slaundre ȝoure hous 993
 Al þough my tale of a chanoun be /
 Of euery ordre som schrewe is par dee /
 And god forbede þat al a companye
 Schulde rewe a singuler mannes folye 997
 To slaundre ȝow is no þing myn entent/
 But to correcten þat is mys I-ment

This tale was not' oonly told for 3ow
 But' eek' for oper moo 3e woot' wel how 1001
 That' among' criste apostles twelue /
 Ther was no traytour but' Iudas himselue
 Than why schulde þe remenaunt' haue a blame
 That gultes were by 3ow I say þe same 1005
 Saue oonly þis if' ye wol herkene me
 If' any Iudas in 3oure couent' be
 Remewe him by tyme I 3ow rede /
 If' schame or los may causen eny drede / 1009
 And beþ no þing' displesed I 3ou pray
 But' in þis caas herkenep what' I say ¶ Narrat
IN londoun was a prest' an annueler
 That' þer In duelled hadde many a 3er 1013
 which was so plesaunt' and so seruisable /
 Vnto þe wyf' wher as he was at table
 That' sche wolde suffre him no þing' for to pay
 For bord ne cloþing' went' he neuer so gay 1017
 And spendyng' siluer had he right' ynough [*leaf 175, back*]
 Ther-of' no force I wol procede as now
 And telle forþ my tale of' þe chanoun
 That' brought þis prest' to confusioun 1021
 This false chanoun cam vpon a day
 Vnto þe prestes chambre wher he lay
 Biseching' him to lene him a certeyn
 Of' gold and he wold quy't hit' him ageyn 1025
 Lene me a mark' quod he but' dayes pre /
 And at' my day I wil it quyte þe /
 And if' so be þat þou fynde me fals
 Anoper day hong' me vp by þe hals 1029
 This prest' him took' a mark' and þat' as swithe
 And þis Chanoun him þankid ofte sipe
 And took' his leue and wente forþ his wey
 And atte þridde day brought' his money / 1033
 And to þe prest' he took' þis gold agayn
 wher-of' þis prest' was wonder glad and fayn

Certes quod he no þing^t annoyeth me
 To lene a man a noble or tuo or þre/ 1037
 Or what^t þing/ were in my possessioun
 whan he so trewe is of^t condicioun
 That^t in no wise he breke wol his day
 To such a man I can neuer say nay 1041
 what^t quod þis chanoun schold I be vntrewe?
 Nay þat^t were þing^t I-fallen of^t þe newe /
 Trouþe is a þing^t þat^t I wol euer kepe /
 Vnto þat^t day in which þat^t I schal crepe 1045
 In to my graue and elles god forbede /
 Bilieueth þis as siker as þour crede /
 God þank^t I and in good tyme be it^t sayd
 That^t þer was neuer man zet^t euel a-payd 1049
 For gold ne siluer þat^t he to me lent
 Ne neuer falshed in myn hert^t I ment
 And sire quod he now of^t my priuete
 Syn þe so goodlich haue be vnto me 1053
 And kyþed to me so gret^t gentilesce
 Som-what^t to quyte wiþ þoure kyndenesse
 I wil þow schewe and if^t þow lust/ to lere [leaf 176]
 [I wil þow teche pleylny the manere¹] [¹—¹ In a later 1057
 hand.]
 how I kan werken in philosophie
 Takith good heed. þe schul seen wel at^t ye
 That^t I wol doon a maystry er I go
 Þe quod þe prest^t. þe sire and wol þe so 1061
 Mary þer of^t I pray þow hertily
 At^t þoure comaundement^t sire trewely
 Quod þe chanoun and elles god forbede
 Lo how þis þeef^t couþe his seruise beede / 1065
 Ful soth it is þat^t such profred seruise
 Stynkeþ as witnessen þese olde wise
 And þat^t ful soone I wol it verefye /
 In þis chanoun roote of^t al treccherie 1069
 That^t euermor delit^t haþ and gladnesse /
 Such feendly þoughtes in his hert^t empresse

How cristes poeple he may to meschief bringe
 God kepe vs from his fals dissimilynge / 1073
 what wiste þis prest/ wiþ whom þat he delte
 Ne of his harm comyng he no þing felte
 O seely prest. o sely Innocent /
 wiþ coueytise anoon þou schalt be blent/ 1077
 O graceles ful blynd is þy conceyt
 No þing art þou war of þe deceyt
 which þat þis fox I-schapien hap to þe
 his wily wrenches y-wis þou maist not fle 1081
 wherfor to go to þe conclusioun
 That referreth to þy confusioun
 Vnhappy man anoon I wil me hie /
 To tellen þin vnwitte and þy folye / 1085
 And eek þe falsnesse of þat oper wrecche /
 Als ferforþ as my connyng wol strecche /
 This Chanoun was my lord 3e wolde weene
 Sire ost in faith and by þe heuen queene / 1089
 It was anoþer chanoun and not he
 That can an hundred fold more subtilte
 he hath bitrayed folkes many tyme /
 Of his falnes it dullith me to ryme 1093
 Euer when I speke of his falshede / *[leaf 176, ba k]*
 For schame of him my cheekes wexen reede/
 Algates þay bygynne for to glowe /
 For reednes haue I noon rizt/ wel I knowe / 1097
 In my visage for fumes diuerse
 Of metals which 3e han me herd reherse
 Consumed and wasted han my reednesse
 Now tak heed of þis chanouns cursednesse / 1101
 Sir quod he to þe prest let 3our man goon
 For quyke siluer þat/ we it hadde anoon
 And let him bringe ounces tuo or thre /
 And whan he comeþ as faste schul 3e see / 1105
 A wonder þing which 3e saugh neuer er þis
 Sire quod þe prest it schal be doon I-wis

He bad his *seruaunt* fecche him his þinges
 And he al redy wax at his biddynge 1109
 And went him forth and com anoon agayn
 wip þis quykt siluer schortly for to sayn /
 And took þese ounces þre to þe chanoun
 And he it layde faire and wel a down 1113
 And bad þe *seruaunt* coles for to bringe
 That/ he anoon might go to his werkynge
 The coles right anoon weren I-fett
 And þis chanoun took out a croselett 1117
 Out of his bosom and schewed it þe prest
 This instrument quod he which þat þou sest
 Tak in þin hond and put þiself þer Inne /
 Of þis quyksiluer an vnce and her bygynne 1121
 In þe name of crist to wax a philosophre /
 Ther ben ful fewe whiche þat I wol profre
 To schewe hem þus moche of my science
 For 3e schul seen heer by experience 1125
 That þis quiksiluer I wol mortifye
 Right in 3oure sight anoon wipouten lye /
 And make it as good siluer and as fyn
 As þer is any in 3oure purs or myn 1129
 Or elles wher and make it malleable /
 And elles holdeth. me fals and vnable /
 Amonges folk for euer to appeere / [leaf 177]
 I haue a powder heer þat cost me deere 1133
 Schal make al good for it is cause of al
 My connyng which þat I 3ou schewe schal
 Voydith 3oure man and let him be þer oute
 And schet þe dore whils we ben aboute 1137
 Oure priuete þat no man vs aspye /
 whiles we werken in þis philosophie /
 Al as he bad fulfilled was in dede /
 This ilke *seruaunt* anoon right out 3ede / 1141
 And his maister schitte þe dore anoon
 And to here labour speedily þai goon

This prest/ at þis cursed chanouns biddyng
 Vppon þe fuyr anoon sette þis þing 1145
 And blew þe fuyr and busied him ful fast/
 And þis chanoun in to þe croslet cast
 A pouder noot I wher-of þat it was
 I-maad ouþer of chalk ouþer of glas 1149
 Or som what elles was nouȝt worþ a flye
 To blynde wiþ þis prest and bad him hye
 These coles for to couchen al aboue:
 The-croislet/. for in tokenyng I þe loue 1153
 Quod þis chanoun þin oughne handes tuo
 Schal wirche al þing which þat schal be do
 Graunt mercy quod þe prest and was ful glad
 And couchede coles as þe chanoun bad 1157
 And whil he besy was. þis feendly wrecche
 This false chanoun þe foule feend him fecche
 Out of his bosom took a bechen cole
 In which ful subtilly was maad an hole / 1161
 And þer-In put was of siluer lymayle /
 And vnce and stopped was wiþoute fayle
 This hole with wex to kepe þe lymail In /
 And vnderstondith þat þis false gyn 1165
 was not maad þer but it was maad bifore
 And oþer þinges I schal telle more /
 Her afterward which þat he with him brought
 Er he com þere to bigyle him he þought / 1169
 And so he dede er þay wente atwynne [leaf 177, back]
 Til he had torned him coupe he nought blynne /
 It dulleþ me whan þat I of him speke /
 On his falshede fayn wold I me wreke / 1173
 If I wist how but he is heer and þere
 he is so variant he byt no where /
 But takeþ heed now sires for goddes loue
 He took his cole of which I spak aboue / 1177
 And in his hond he bar it priuely
 And whiles þe preste couched bysily

The coles as I tolde 3ow er þis
 This chanoun sayde freend 3e doon amys 1181
 This is not couched as it oughte be
 But soone I schal amenden it quod he /
 Now let me melle þer with but a while /
 For of 3ow haue I pitee by seint Gile 1185
 3e been right hoot / I se wel how 3e swete
 haue heer a cloþ and wyepe a-way þe wete
 And whiles þat þis prest him wyped haas
 This chanoun took his cole I schrewe his faas 1189
 And layd it abouen on þe mydward
 Of þe croslet / and blew wel afterward
 Til þat þe coles gonne faste brenne
 Now 3eue vs drinke quod þe chanoun þenne / 1193
 Als swiþe al schal be wel I vndertake
 Sitte we down and let vs mery make /
 And whan þe chanouns bechene cole /
 was brent al þe lymail out of þe hole 1197
 In to þe crosselet anon fel a down
 And so it moste nedes by resoun
 Sins it so euen aboue couched was
 But þer of wist þe prest no þing allas 1201
 He demed alle þe colis I-liche goode
 For of þe sleight he no þing vnderstood
 And whan þis alcamister saugh his tyme
 Rys vp sire prest quod he and stonde byme 1205
 And fo I wot wel Ingot haue 3e noon
 Goth walkith forth and brynge a chalkstoon
 For I wol make it of þe same schap [leaf 178]
 That is an Ingold if I may haue hap / 1209
 And bringe with 3ou a bolle or a panne
 Ful of water and 3e schul wel se þanne /
 how þat oure besynes schal happe and preue
 And 3it for 3e schul haue no mysbileeue 1213
 Ne wrong conceyt of me in 3oure absence
 I ne wol nought ben out of 3oure presence /

But go with ȝou and come wiȝ ȝou agayn
 The chambur dore schortly for to sayn 1217
 Thay opened and schette and wente forȝ here weye
 And forth with hem ȝey caryed ȝe keye /
 And comen agayn wiȝouten eny delay /
 what' schuld I tary al ȝe longe day 1221
 he took' ȝe chalk/ and schop it in ȝe wise /
 Of' an Ingot' as I schal ȝow deuysel /
 I say he took' out' of' his oughne sleeue
 A teyne of siluer euel mot' he cheeue 1225
 which ȝat' was but' an vnce of' wigh't
 And takeȝ heed now of' his cursed sligh't
 he schop his Ingot' in lengȝe and in brede /
 Of' ȝis teyne wiȝouten eny drede 1229
 So sleighly ȝat' ȝe prest' it nought' aspyde
 And in his sleeue agayn he gan it hyde /
 And fro ȝe fuyr he took' vp his mateere /
 And in to ȝe Ingot' put' it' with mery cheere / 1233
 And in to ȝe watir vessel he it cast'
 whan ȝat' him list and bad ȝis prest' as fast'
 Loke what' ȝer is put in ȝin hond and grope
 Thou fynde ȝer siluer schalt' as I hope / 1237
 what' deuel of' helle schold it elles be /
 Schauyng' of' siluer siluer is par de
 He putte in his hond and tok' vp a teyne
 Of' siluer fyn and glad in euery veyne : 1241
 was ȝis prest' whan he saugh it was so
 Goddes blessyng' and his modres also
 And alle halwes haue ȝe sire chanoun
 Seyde ȝe prest' and I her malisoun 1245
 But' and ȝe vouche sauȝ to teche me [leaf 178, back]
 This nobil craft' and ȝis subtilite
 I wil be ȝoure in al ȝat' euer I may
 Quod ȝis chanoun ȝet' wol I make assay 1249
 The secound tyme ȝat' ȝe mow taken heede
 And ben expert' of' ȝis and in ȝour neede

Anoper day ȝour self^t in myn absence
 This discipline and þis crafty science 1253
 Let^t take another vnce quod he þo
 Of quyksiluer wiþouten wordes mo
 And do þer with as ȝe haue doon er þis
 wiþ þat^t oper which now siluer is 1257
 The prest^t him busyeth in al þat^t he can
 To doon as þis chanoun þis cursed man
 Comaunded him and faste blew þe fuyr
 For to come to theffect^t of^t his desyr 1261
 And þis chanoun right^t in þe mene while
 Al redy was þis prest^t eft^t to bygile
 And for a countenance in his hond bar
 An holow stikke tak keep and be war 1265
 In þende of^t which an vnce and no more
 Of siluer lymail put^t was as bifore
 was in his cole and stopped wiþ wex wel
 For to kepe in his limail euery del 1269
 And whil þe prest/ was in his besynesse
 This chanoun with his stikke gan him dresse /
 To him anoon and his pouder cast^t In
 As he dede er þe deuel out^t of^t his skyn 1273
 him torne I pray to god for his falshede
 For he was euer fals in oth and deede
 And wiþ þis stikke alone þe croslet^t
 That^t was ordeyned wiþ þat^t false get^t 1277
 He styred þe coles til relente gan
 The wex agayn þe fuyr as euery man
 But/ it a fool be woot^t wel it moot^t nede /
 And al þat^t in þe hole was out ȝede / 1281
 And in to þe croslet^t hastily it fel
 [¹Now good sires what^t wol ȝe bet þen wel^t : [¹— In a later hand.]
 whan þat^t þis prest thus was begiled a-gayn,¹]
 Supposyng^t not^t but^t trouþe soþ to sayn [leaf 179] 1285
 he was so glad þat^t I can nought/ expresse /
 In no maner his myrþe and his gladnesse

And to þe chanoun he profred eft' soone
 Body and good 3e quod þe chanoun soone / 1289
 Though pore I be crafty þou schalt' me fynde /
 I warne þe 3et' is þer more byhynde
 Is þer any copper her Inne quod he
 3e sir quod þis prest' I trowe þer be 1293
 Elles go bye som and þat' as swithe
 Now goode sire go forth þy way and hythe
 he went/ his way and with þis copper cam
 And þis chanoun it' in his hondes nam 1297
 And of that' copper weyed out' but' an ounce
 Al to simple is my tongue to pronounce
 The minister and of his witt þe doublesnesse /
 Of þis chanoun roote of' cursednesse 1301
 he semed frendly to hem þat' knew him nought'
 But' he was fendly boþe in werk' and þought'
 It' werieþ me to telle of' his falsnesse /
 And napeles 3it wol I it expresse 1305
 To þat' entent men may be war þer by
 And for noon oþer cause trewely /
 he put' þis vnce of' copper in þe croslet'
 And on þe fuyr als swithe he haþ it set' 1309
 And cast' in pouder and made þe prest' to blowe
 And in his worching' for to stoupe lowe
 As he dede er and al nas but a iape
 Right' as him list' þe prest' he made his ape / 1313
 And afterward in þe Ingot' he it cast'
 And in þe panne putte it' atte last/
 Of water and in he put his owne hond
 And in his sleeue as 3e byforenhond 1317
 herde me telle he had a siluer teyne
 he sleyghly took' it out' þis cursed heyne
 Vnwitynge þis prest' of' his false craft/
 And in þe pannes botme he haþ it laft' 1321
 And in þe water rumbleþ to and fro
 And wonder priuely took' vp also

The coper teyne nought knowyng' þis prest'
 And hidde it and hent' him by þe brest/ 1325
 And to him spak' and þus sayde in his game
 Stoupeth a-down by god 3e ben to blame
 helpeþ me now as I dede 3ow whil er
 Put' in 3our hond and loke what is þer 1329
 This prest' took' vp þis siluer teyne anoon
 And þanne sayde þe chanoun let vs goon
 wip þese þre teynes whiche þat' we han wrought'
 To som goldsmyth and wite if' it be ought' 1333
 For by my faith I nolde for myn hood
 But' if' þey were siluer fyn and good
 And þat' as swiþe proued schal it be
 Vnto þe goldsmith wip þese teynes þre 1337
 Thay went' and putte þese teynes in assay
 To fuyr and hamer might' no man say nay
 But' þay were as hem oughte be
 This sotted prest' who was gladder þan he // 1341
 was neuer brid gladder agayn þe day
 Ne nightyngale in þe sesoun of' may
 was neuer noon þat' liste better to synge /
 Ne lady lustier in carolynges 1345
 And for to speke of' loue and wommanhede
 Ne knyght' in armes doon an hardy deede/
 To stonde in grace of' his lady deere
 Than hadde þis prest' þis craft' for to lere 1349
 And to þe chanoun thus he spak' and seyde
 For þe loue of' god þat' for vs deyde
 And as I may deserue it vnto 3ow
 what' schal þis receyt' coste telleþ now 1353
 By oure lady quod þe chanoun it is deere
 I warne 3ow wel for sire I and a freere
 In Engeland þer can man it make /
 No fors quop he now sire for goddes sake / 1357
 what' schal I paye telleþ me I pray
 I-wis quod he it is ful dere I say

Sire at a word if þat 3e lust it haue
 3e schul pay fourty pound so god me saue / [leaf 180] 1361
 And nere þe frendschipe þat 3e dede er þis
 To me. 3e schulde paye more I-wys
 This prest þe somme of fourty pound anoon
 Of nobles fette and took hem euerychoon 1365
 To þis chanoun for þis ilkt receyt
 Al his werkyng nas but fraude and deceyt/
 Sire prest he seyde I kepe haue no loos
 Of my craft for I wold it kept were cloos 1369
 And as 3e loueth me kepeþ it secre
 For and men knewe / al my sotilte
 By god men wolden haue so gret enuye
 To me by cause of my philosophie 1373
 I schulde be deed þer were noon oþer weye
 God it forbede quop þe prest what seye
 3et had I leuer spenden al þe good
 which þat I haue and elles wax I wood 1377
 Than þat 3e schulde falle in such meschief
 For 3our good wil sir haue 3e right good preef
 Quop þe chanoun · and far wel graunt mercy
 he went his way and neuer þe prest him sey 1381
 After þis day and whan þat þis prest scholde /
 Maken assay at such tyme as he wolde /
 Of þis receyt far wel it wold not be /
 lo þus byiaped and bygilt was he 1385
 Thus makeþ he his introduction
 To bringe folk to here destruccioun
 Considereth sires how þat in ech astaaf
 Bitwixe men and gold þer is debaat 1389
 So ferforth þat vnneþe þer is noon
 This multiplying blent so many oon
 That in good faith I trowe þat it be /
 The cause grettest of which skarsete 1393
 Philosophres speken so mistyly
 In þis craft þat men conne not come þer by

For any witt þat men han now on dayes
 They may wel chiteren as doon þese iayes 1397
 And in here termes sette lust and peyne
 But to her purpos schul þay neuer atteyne [*leaf 180, back*]
 A man may lightly lerne if he haue ought
 To multiplie and bringe his good to noughȝt 1401
 Lo such a lucre is in þis lusty game/
 A mannes mirþe it wol torne in to grame /
 And empte also grete and heuy purses
 And make folk to purchace curses 1405
 Of hem þat han her good þer-to I-lent
 O fy for schame þay þat haue be brent
 Allas can þay not fle þe fuyres hete
 3e þat it vsen I rede 3e it lete 1409
 lest 3e lesen al for bet þan neuer is late
 Neuer to þriue were to long a date /
 Though 3e prolle ay 3e schul it neuer fynde
 3e ben as bolde as is bayard þe blynde 1413
 That blundreþ forþ and peril casteth noon
 he is as bold to renne a-gayn a stoon
 As for to go bysides in þe wey /
 So fare 3e þat multiplie I sey 1417
 If þat 3oure y3en can noughȝt seen aright
 loke þat 3oure mynde lakke noughȝt his sight
 For þough 3e loke neuer so brode and stare /
 3e schul noughȝt wynne vpon þat chaffare / 1421
 But wasten al þat þay may rape and renne
 wiþdrawe þe fuyr lest it so faste brenne
 Medleþ no more wiþ þat art I mene /
 For 3if 3e doon 3oure þrift is goon ful clene 1425
 And right as swithe I wol 3ow telle heere
 what þat þe philosophres sein in þis mateere /
 ¶ lo þus saiþ arnold of þe newe town
 As his Rosarie maketh mencion 1429
 He saith right þus wiþouten eny lye
 Ther may no man mercury mortifye

But hit be with his broþer knowleching
 how þat he which þat first sayd þis þing 1433
 Of philosophres fader was hermes
 he saip how þe dragoun douteles
 he dyep nought but if þat he be slayn
 wiþ his broþer and þat is for to sayn [leaf 181] 1437
 By þe dragoun mercury and noon oþer
 he vnderstood and brimstoon be his broþer
 That out of sol and luna were I-drawe
 And þefore sayde he take heed to my sawe / 1441
 Let no man besy him þis art to seche /
 But þat he thentencioun and speche /
 Of philosophres vnderstonde can
 And if he do he is a lewed man 1445
 For þis sciens and þis connyng quod he
 Is of þe secre of secretz par de
 Also þer was a disciple of plato
 That on a tyme sayde his maister to 1449
 As his book somer wil bere witnesse
 And þis was his demaunde in sothfastnesse /
 Tel me þe name of þe priue stoon
 And plato answered vnto him anoon 1453
 Take þe stoon þat titanos men name /
 which is þat quod he magnasia is þe same
 Sayde plato 3e sire and is it þus
 This ignotus per ignotius 1457
 what is magnasia good sir I 3ou pray
 It is a water þat is maad I say
 Of elementes foure quod plato
 Telle me þe rooche good sire quod he þo 1461
 Of þat water if it be 3our wille
 Nay nay quod plato certeyn þat I nylle
 The philosophres sworn were euerich oon
 That thay scholde discouere it vnto man noon 1465
 Ne in no book it write in no manere /
 For vnto crist it is so leef and deere

That he wil not þat it discouered be /
 But wher it likeþ to his deite / 1469
 Man to enspire and eek for to defende
 whom þat him likeþ lo þis is þe ende
 Than conclude I þus syn god of heuene /
 Ne wol not þat þe philosophres neuene / 1473
 how þat a man schal come vnto þis stoon
 I rede as for þe beste let it goon [leaf 181, back]
 For who-so makeþ god his aduersarie
 As for to werke eny þing in contrarie 1477
 Vnto his wil certes neuer schal he priue
 Though þat he multiplie terme of al his lyue
 And þer a poynt for ended is my tale
 God send euery trewe man boote of his bale / 1481
 ¶ Here endeth þe chanouns ȝeman his tale

[No break in the MS.]

GROUP C. FRAGMENT IV.

§ 1. THE DOCTOR'S TALE.

HARLEIAN MS. 7334 (British Museum).

¶ And here bygynneth þe tale of þe Doctor of þe phisik^t

Ther was as telleþ Thitus lyuius 1

A knight þat cleped was virginieus

Fulfilde of honours and of worþines

And strong of frendes and of gret riches 4

A doughter he hadde by his wyf

And neuer ne hadde he mo in al his lyf

Fair was þis mayde in excellent beaute

Above euery wight that men may se 8

For nature hap wiþ souereyn diligence

I-formed hir in so gret excellence

As þough sche wolde say lo I nature

þus can I forme and peynte a creature 12

whan þat/ me lust who can me counterfete

Pigmalion nouȝt þough he alwey forge and bete /

Or graue or peynte for I dar wel sayn

appollus ȝepherus schulde wirche in vayn 16

To graue or paynte or forge & bete

If þay presumed me to counterfete

For he þat is þe former principal

hap maad me his viker general 20

To forme and peynte erþely creature

Right as me lust al þing is in my cure

Vnder þe moone þat may wane and waxe

And for my werke noþing wol I axe 24

My lord and I ben fully at accord
 I made hir to þe worschip of my lord
 So do I alle myn oþer creatures
 what colour þat þay been or what figures / 28
 Thus semeþ me þat nature wolde say
 This mayde was of age twelf 3er and tway [leaf 182]
 In which þat nature haþ suche delite
 For right as sche can peynte a lili white 32
 And rody a rose right with such peynture
 Sche peynted haþ þis noble creature
 Er sche was born vpon her limes fre
 were als bright as such colour schulde be 36
 And phebus deyed hadde hire tresses grete
 I-lyk to þe stremes of his borned hete
 And if þat excellent was hir beaute
 A þousand fold more vertuous was sche 40
 And hire ne lakkeþ no condicioun
 That is to preyse as by discrecioun
 As wel in body as goost chaste was sche
 For which sche floured in virginite 44
 with alle humilite and abstinence
 with alle attemperaunce and pacience
 with mesure eek and beryng of array
 Discret sche was in answeyng alway 48
 Though sche were wis pallas dar I sayn
 hir facound eek ful wommanly and playn
 Noon countrefeted termes hadde sche
 To seme wys but after hir degre 52
 Sche spak and alle hire wordes more and lesse
 Sovnyng in vertu and in gentillesse
 Schamefast sche was in maydenes schamfastnesse
 Constant in hert. and euer in besynesse 56
 To dryue hire out of hir slogardye
 Bachus had of hir mouþ no maistrye
 For wille and þough doon venus encrece
 As men in fuyr wil caste oyle or grece 60

And of hir oughne vertu vnconstreigned
 Sche haþ ful ofte tyme hire seek' y-feyned
 For þat' sche wolde fleen þe companye
 wher likly was to treten of folye 64
 As is at festes reueles and at daunces
 That' ben occasiouns of' daliaunces
 Such þinges maken children for to be /
 To soone rype and bold. as men may se / [leaf 182, back] 68
 which is ful perilous and haþ ben 3ore
 For al to soone may sche lerne lore
 Of' boldenesse whan sche is a wyf'
 And 3e maystresses in 3oure olde lyf' 72
 That' lordes doughtres han in gouernaunce
 Ne takeþ of my word no displesaunce /
 Things þat ben set' in gouernynge
 Of' lordes douȝtres conly for tuo þinges / 76
 Oþer for 3e han kept' 3our honeste
 Oþer elles for 3e han falle in frelete
 And knowe wel y-nough þe olde daunce
 And conne forsake fully meschaunce 80
 For euermo þefore for cristes sake /
 kepeþ wel þo þat' 3e vndertake
 A þeof' of' venesoun þat' haþ forlaft'
 his licorousnesse and al his theues craft' 84
 Can kepe a forest' best' of' eny man
 Now kepe hir wel for and 3e wil 3e can
 loke wel to no vice 3e assent'
 lest 3e be dampned for 3our wilful intent 88
 For who-so dop a traytour is certayn
 And takeþ keep of' þat' þat' sche schal sayn
 Of' al tresoun souereyn pestilence
 Is whan a wighȝt' bytrayeth Innocence 92
 3e fadres and 3e modres eek' also
 Though 3e han children be it' oon or mo
 3oure is þe charge of' al her sufferance
 whiles þay be vnder 3our gouernaunce / 96

Beth war þat by ensample of þoure lyuyng
 Ouper by negligence in chastisyng
 That þay ne perische for I dar wel seye
 If þat þay doon þe schul ful sore abeye 100
 vnder a scheperd softe and necligent
 The wolf haþ many a schep and lamb torent
 Sufficeþ oon ensample now as here
 For I moot turne aȝein to my matiere 104
 This mayde of which I telle my tale expresse
 So kept hir self hir neded no maystresse [leaf 183]
 For in hir lyuyng maydens mighte rede
 As in a book euery good word and dede / 108
 That longeþ vnto a mayden vertuous
 Sche was so prudent and so bounteous
 For þe which out sprong on euery syde /
 Boþe of hir beaute and bounte wyde 112
 That þurgh þe lond þay praysed hir ilkoone /
 That louede vertu saue enye alloone /
 That sory is of oþer mennes wele /
 And glad is of his sorwe and vnhele 116
 The doctor made þis desceioun
 This mayde wente vpon a day in to þe toun
 Toward þe temple with hir moder deere
 As is of ȝonge maydenes þe manere 120
 Now was þer a Iustice in þe toun
 That gouernour was of þat Regioun
 And so bifel þis Iuge his eyȝen cast
 Vpon þis mayde auysing hir ful fast 124
 As sche cam forby þer þe Iuge stood
 Anoon his herte chaunged and his mood
 So was he caught wiþ beaute of þis mayde
 And to himself ful priuely he sayde 128
 This mayde schal be myn for any man
 Anoon þe feend in to his herte ran
 And taughte him sodeinly by what slighte
 This mayde to his purpos wyne he mighte / 132

For certes by no fors ne by no meede
him þought he was not able for to speede /
For sche was strong of frendes and eek sche
Conformed was in such souerayn bounte 136
That wel he wist he might hir neuer wyne
As for to make hir with hir body synne
For which wiþ gret deliberacioun
he sent after a clerk was in þe toun 140
The which he knew for subtil and for bold
This Iuge vnto þe clerk his tale hap told
In secre wyse and made him to assure
He schulde telle it to no creature [leaf 183, back] 144
And if he dede he schulde lese his heed
whan þat assented was þis cursed reed
Glad was the Iuge and made glad cheere /
And ȝaf him ȝiftes precious and deere / 148
whan schapen was al þis conspiracye /
Fro poynt to poynt how þat his lecherie
Parformed scholde be ful subtilly
As ȝe schul here afterward openly / 152
hom goþ þis clerk þat highte Claudius
This false Iuge þat highte apius
So was his name for it is no fable
But knowen for a storial þing notable 156
The sentence of hit soþ is out of doute
This false iugge goþ now fast aboute /
To hasten his delit al þat he may /
And so bifel soone after on a day 160
This false Iuge as telleþ vs þe story
As he was wont sat in his consistory
And ȝaf his domes vpon sondry caas
This false clerk com forth a ful good paas 164
And saide lord if þat it be ȝour wille
As doþ me right vpon þis pitous bille
In which I pleyne vpon virgilius
And if he wile seyn it is nouȝt þus 168

I wil proue hit and fynde good wisesse
 That soþ is þat my bulle wol expresse /
 The Iuge answerd of þis in his absence
 I may not giue diffinityf sentence 172
 let do him calle and I wol gladly hiere
 Thou schalt haue alle right and no wrong heere
 Virginius com to wite þe Iugges wille /
 And right anoon was red þis cursed bille 176
 The sentence of hit was as 3e schul heere
 ¶ To 3ow my lord sire apius so deere
 Schewep 3oure pore seruauent Claudius
 how þat a knight called Virginius 180
 A3eins þe lawe a3ens alle equitye /
 holdeth expresse a3einst þe wille of me [leaf 184]
 My seruauent which þat my thral is by right
 which fro myn hous was stolen on a night 184
 whiles sche was ful 3ong þat wol I preue
 By wisesse lord so þat 3e 3ow not greue
 Sche is nought his dou3ter what so he say
 wherfore to 3ow my lord þe Iugge I pray 188
 3elde me my þraht if þat it be 3our wille
 lo þis was al þe sentence of þe bille
 Virgineus gan vpon þe clerk byholde
 But hastily er he his tale tolde 192
 he wolde haue proued it as schold a knight
 And eek by witnessyng of many a wight
 That al was fals þat sayde his aduersarie
 This cursed Iuge wold no lenger tarye / 196
 Ne heere a word more of virgineus
 But 3af his Iugement and saide þus
 I deme anoon þis clerk his seruauent haue
 Thou schalt no lenger in þin hous hir haue 200
 Go bringe hir forþ and put hir in oure warde
 This clerk schal haue his thral thus I a-warde
 And whan þis worþy knight virgineus
 Thurgh þassent of þis Iuge apius 204

Moste by force his deere douȝter ȝiuen
 Vnto þe Iuge in lecchery to lyuen
 he goþ him hom and sette him in his halle /
 And leet' anoon his deere douȝter calle / 208
 And wiþ a face deed as aisschen colde
 vpon hir humble face he gan byholde
 with fadres pite stiking' þorugh his herte
 Al wolde he from his purpos not conuerte / 212
 Doughter quod he *virginea* by þy name
 Ther ben tuo weyes eyþer deþ or schame
 That' þou most' suffre allas þat I was bore
 For neuer þou deseruedest' wherfore 216
 To deyen with a swerd or with a knyft'
 O deere doughter ender of' my lif'
 which I haue fostred vp with such plesaunce ·
 That' þou nere oute of' my remembraunce [leaf 184, back] 220
 O doughter which . þat art my laste wo
 And in þis lif' my laste ioie also
 O gemme of' chastite in pacience
 Tak' þou þy deth for þis is my sentence 224
 For loue and not' for hate þou most' be deed
 My pitous hond mot' smyten of' þin heed
 Allas þat' euer apius þe say
 Thus haþ he falsly iugged þe to day 228
 And told hir al þe caas as ȝe bifore
 han herd . it nedeth nought' to telle it more
 Mercy deere fader quod þis mayde
 And with þat' word sche boþe hir armes layde / 232
 Aboute his nekke as sche was wont to doo
 The teeres brast' out' of' hir eyȝen tuo
 And sayde goode fader schal I dye
 Is ther no grace is þer no remedye 236
 No certeyn deere doughter myn quod he /
 Than ȝeue me leue fader myn quod sche /
 My deþ for to compleyne a litel space /
 For par dy Ieffa ȝaf' his douȝter grace 240

For to compleyne er he hir slough allas
 And God it woot^t no þing^t was hir trespas
 But^t þat^t sche ran hir fader first/ to se
 To welcome him with gret^t solempnite 244
 And with þat^t word a swoun sche fel anoon /
 And after whan hir swownyng^t was agoon
 Sche riseþ vp and to hir fader sayde /
 Blessed be god þat^t I schal deye a mayde / 248
 3eue me my deth er þat^t I haue a schame
 Do with 3our child 3our wille a goddes name
 And with þat^t word sche prayed him ful ofte
 That^t wiþ his swerd he schulde smyte hir softe 252
 And wiþ þat^t word on swoune doun sche fel
 hir fader with ful sorwful hert^t and fel
 hir heed of^t smoot^t and by þe top it hente
 And to þe Iuge bigan it^t to presente 256
 As he sat^t in his doom in concistory
 whan the Iuge it say as saiþ the story [leaf 185]
 he bad take him and honge him faste
 But^t right^t anoon alle þe poeple in þraste / 260
 To saue þe knight^t for rouþe and for pite
 For knowen was þe fals iniquite /
 The poeple anoon had suspect^t in þis þing^t
 By moner of^t þis clerkes chalengyng^t 264
 That^t it was by thassent^t of^t apius
 That^t wiste wel þat^t he was leccherous
 For which vnto þis Apius þay goon
 And casten him in prisoun right^t anoon 268
 wher as he slough himself^t and Claudius
 That^t *seruaunt*^t was vnto þis Apius
 was demed for to honge vpon a tree
 But^t virgineus of^t his grete pite 272
 Prayde for him þat^t he was exiled
 And elles certes he had ben bigiled
 The remenaunt^t were anhangd more and lesse /
 That^t were consented to þis cursednesse / 276

Her may men se how synne hath his merite
 Be war for no man woot how god wol smyte /
 In no degre ne in which maner wise
 The worm of conscience wol arise 280
 Of wicked lyf þough it so pryue be
 That no man woot of it but god and he
 wher þat he be lewed man or lered
 He not how soone þat he may be afered 284
 Therefore I rede þow this counseil take
 Forsakith synne / er synne yow forsake
 ¶ Here endeth þe Doctor of phisique his tale

[No break in the MS.]

- ¶ And here bygynneth þe prologe of the Pardoner /
- O wre ost gan swere as he were wood
 harrow quod he by nayles and by blood 288
 This was a cursed þef a fals Iustice
 As schendful dep as herte can deuise
 So falle vpon his body and his boones
 The deuel I bykenne him al at oones 292
 Allas to deere boughte sche hir beaute
 wherfore I say þat alle men may se [leaf 185, back]
 That giftes of fortune or of nature /
 Ben cause of deth of many a creature / 296
 hir beaute was hir dep I dar wel sayn
 Allas so pitously as he was slayn
 [.
 no gap in the MS.] 300
 But trewely myn owne maister deere
 This was a pitous tale for to heere
 But napeles pas ouer þis is no fors
 I pray to god to saue þi gentil corps 304
 [.
 no gap in the MS.]
 And euery boist ful of þi letuarie
 God blesse hem and oure lady seinte marie / 308
 So mot I þen þou art a propre man
 And y-lik a prelat by saint Runyan
 Sayde I wel can I not speke in terme
 But wel I woot þou dost myn herte erme 312
 I haue almost y-caught a cardiacle
 By corpus boones but I haue triacle
 Oper elles a draught of moyst and corny ale
 Oper but I hiere anoon a mery tale 316

Myn hert is brost'. for pite of þat' mayde
 Thow pardonere þou belamy he sayde /
 Tel vs a tale for þou canst' many oon
 It' schal be doon quod he and þat' anoon 320
 But' first' quod he her at' þis ale stake /
 I wil first' drynke and byt' on a cake
 But' right' anoon þe gentils gan to crie
 Nay let him tellen vs no ribaudye 324
 Tel vs som moral þing' þat' we may leere /
 Gladly quod he and sayde as 3e schal heere
 But' in þe cuppe wil I me beþinke
 vpon some honest' tale whil I drinke / 328

[No break in the MS.]

¶ Narrat

L Ordyngs quod he in chirche whan I preche
 I peyne me to haue an hauteyn speche /
 And ryngi it out as lowd as doþ a belle
 For I can al by rote þat I telle 332
 My teeme is alway oon and euer was
 Radix omnium malorum est Cupiditas
 First I pronounce whennes þat I come
 And þanne my bulles schewe I alle and some [leaf 186] 336
 Oure liege lordes seal vpon my patent
 That schewe I first my body to warent/
 That no man be so hardy prest ne clerk
 Me to destourbe of cristes holy werk 340
 And after þat þan tel I forth my tales
 Bulles of popes and of Cardynales /
 Of patriarkes and of bisshops I schewe
 And in latyn speke I wordes fewe / 344
 To sauore with my predicacioun
 And for to stere hem to deuocioun
 Thanne schewe I forth my longe cristal stooness
 I-crammed ful of cloutes and of boones 348
 Reliks þay ben as wene þei echoon
 Than haue I in latoun a schulder boon
 which þat was of an holy Iewes scheep
 Good men say I tak of my wordes keep 352
 If þat þis boon be waische in eny welle /
 If cow or calf or scheep or oxe swelle
 That eny worm hap ete or worm I-stonge
 Tak water of þat welle and waisch his tonge 356

And it is hool anoon and forþer-more
 Of pokkes and of scabbe and euery sore /
 Schal euery scheep be hool þat of þis wellle
 That drynketh a draught tak heed eek what I telle 360
 If þat þe goode man þat þe beest oweþ
 wol euery wike er þat þe cok him croweþ
 Fastynge drynke / of þis wellle a draught
 As þilke holy Iew oure eldres taught 364
 His beestes and his stoor schal multiplie
 And sires also it kelith Ialousie
 For þough a man be ful in ialous rage
 let make wiþ þis water his potage 368
 And neuer schal he more his wyf mys trist
 þough he þe soþ of hir defaute wist
 Al hadde sche take prestes tuo or þre
 her is a meteyn eek þat ȝe may see 372
 he þat his honde put in þis metayn
 he schal haue multiplying of grayn [leaf 186, back]
 whan he hap sowen . be it whete or otes
 So þat ȝe offre pans or elles grootes 376
 And men and wommen oon þing warne I ȝow
 If eny wight be in þis chirche now
 That hap doon synne orrible þat he
 Dar nought for schame of it schryuen be 380
 Or ony womman be sche ȝong or old
 That hath y-maad hir housbond cokewold
 which folk schal haue no power ne grace
 To offre to my relikes in þis place 384
 And who so fint him out of suche blame
 Thay wol come vp and offre in goddes name
 And I assoile hem by þe auctorite
 which þat by bulle . was I-graunted me 388
 By þis gaude haue I wonne euery ȝeer
 An hundred mark syn I was pardonere
 I stonde lik a clerk in my pulpit
 And whan þe lewed poeple is doun I-set 392

I preche so as ȝe haue herd bifore
 And telle hem an hondred Iapes more
 Than peyne I me to strecche forþ my necke
 And est and west vpon þe poeple I bekke 396
 As doþ a dowfe sytting' on a berne
 Myn hondes and my tonge goon so ȝerne
 That it is ioie to se my busynesse
 Of auarice and of such cursednesse 400
 Is al my preching' for to make hem fre
 To ȝeue here pans and namely vnto me
 For myn entent' is nought' but for to wynne
 And no þing' for correccioun of synne 404
 I rekke neuer. when þay ben I-beryed
 Though þat here soules gone a blakeberyed
 For certes many a predicacioun
 Comeþ ofte tyme of euel entencioun 408
 Som for plesauns of folk' and flaterie
 To ben auaunced by ypocrisie
 And som for veine gloir and som for hate
 For whan I dar not' oþer weys debate [leaf 187] 412
 Than wil I styng'e him with my tonge smerte
 In preching' so þat he schal not' astert'
 To be diffamed falsly if þat he
 haþ trespass' to my breþeren or to me 416
 For þough I telle not' his propre name
 Men schal wel knowe þat it is þe same /
 By signes and by oþer circumstaunces
 Thus quyt' I folk' þat doon vs displesaunces 420
 Thus put' I out' my venym vnder hiewe
 Of holynes. to seme holy and trewe /
 But schortly myn entent I wol deuyse
 I preche no þing' but of coueityse 424
 Therfor my teem is ȝit' and euer was
 Radix omnium. malorum est Cupiditas
 Thus can I preche agayn þe same vice
 which þat I vse and þat is auarice 428

But^t though my self^f be gulty in þe synne
 3it can I make oþer folk to twynne /
 From auarice and soone to repent
 But^t þat/ is not^t my principal entent 432
 I preche no þing^t but for coueitise
 Of þis matier it ought Inough suffice
 Than telle I hem ensamples many oon
 Of olde þinges longe tyme agoon 436
 For lewed people louen tales olde
 which þinges can þay wel report^t and holde /
 what^t trowe 3e whiles I may preche
 And wyne gold and siluer for I teche 440
 That^t I wil lyue in pouert^t wilfully
 Nay nay I þough^t it/ neuer trewly
 For I wol preche and begge in sondry londes
 I wil do no labour wip myn hondes 444
 Ne make basketis and lyue þer by
 By cause I wil nough^t begge ydelly
 I wol noon of thapostles counterfete
 I wol haue money. wolle chese and whete / 448
 Al were it 3euen of þe prestes page
 Or of þe porest^t wydow in a village [leaf 187, back]
 And schold hir children sterue for famyn
 Nay I wol drinke licour of þe wyn 452
 And haue a ioly wenche in euery toun
 But^t herknep lordynges my conclusioun
 3oure likyng^t is. þat^t I schal telle a tale
 Now haue I dronk^t a draught^t of corny ale / 456
 By god I hope I schal telle 3ow a þing^t
 That^t schal by resoun be at^t 3our liking^t
 For þough myself^f be a ful vicious man
 A moral tale 3it I 3ow telle can 460
 which I am wont^t to preche for to wyne
 Now hold 3our pees my tale I wol byginne

[Partial break of one line in the MS.]

¶ Narrat

IN Flaundres whilom was a companye /
 Of 3onge folkes þat haunted folye 464
 As ryot^t hasard stywes and tauernes
 wher as wiþ lutes harpes and gyternes
 Thay daunce and play at dees boþe day & night
 And ete also and drynk ouer her might^t 468
 Thurgh which þay doon þe deuyl sacrificise
 wiþinne þe deueles temple in cursed wise
 By superfluite abhominable
 her othes been so greet and so dampnable 472
 That it is grisly for to hieere hem swere
 Our blisful lordes body þay totere
 hem þoughte Iewes rent^t him nouȝt y-nough
 And ech of hem at oþeres synne lough^t 476
 And right anoon þer come tombesteris
 [.
 *no gap in the MS.*]
 Whiche þat ben verray þe deueles officeres 480
 To kyndle and blowe þe fuyr of lecherie
 þat is anexid vnto glotonye
 The holy wryt take I to my witenesse ¶ nolite inebriare vino
 That luxury is in wyn and dronkenesse in quo &c. 484
 lo how þat dronken loth vnkyndely
 lay by his doughtres tuo vnwityngly
 So dronk he was he niste what he wrought
 herodes who-so wel þe story souȝht^t 488
 [.
 *no spurious lines in this MS.*]

whan he of wyn was repleet^t at his fest [leaf 188]
 Right^t at his oughne table ȝaf^t his hest
 To sle þe baptist^t Iohn ful gilteles
 Seneca seiþ a good word douteles 492
 he seiþ he can no difference fynde
 Bituyx a man þat is out of his mynde
 And a man þe which is dronkelewe
 But^t þat woodnes fallen in a schrewe 496
 Perseuereth lenger þan doth dronkennesse
 O glutonye ful of corsidnesse
 O cause first^t of oure confusioun
 O origial of oure dampnacioun 500
 Til crist had bought^t out^t wip his blood agayn
 lo how dere schortly for to sayn
 Abought^t was first/ þis cursed felonye
 Corupt^t was al þis world for glotonye 504
 Adam our fader and his wyf also
 Fro paradys to labour and to wo
 were dryuen for þat vice it is no drede
 For whils þat^t adam fasted as I rede 508
 he was in paradis and whan þat he
 Eet^t of þe fruyt^t defendit of a tre
 he was out^t cast^t to wo and in-to peyne
 O. glotony. wel ough^t vs on þe pleyne 512
 O. wist^t a man how many maladyes
 Folwith of excesse and of glotonyes
 he wolde be þe more mesurable
 Of his diete sitting^t at his table 516
 Allas þe schorte prote þe tendre mouþ
 Makeþ þat^t Est^t. West^t. north and south
 In erpe in watir in ayer man to swynke
 To gete a sely glotoun mete and drynke. 520
 Of þis matier o poul wel canstow trete
 Mete vnto wombe and wombe vnto mete
 Schal god destroyen boþe as powel seiþ
 Ailas a foul þing^t is it by my faip 524

*Quam diu ieiunauit adam
in paradyso fuit comedit
et eiectus est statim duxit
uxorem &c.*

*Esca ventris & venter
escis deus autem hunc
& illam destruet &c.*

To say þis word / and fouler is þe dede
 whan men so drynke / of þe whyt and rede Ad philipenses
capitulo 3^o
 That of his þrote he makip his priue [leaf 188, back]
 Thurgh pilke cursed superfluite 528
 Thapostil wepyng saip ful pitously
 Ther walkith many of which þou told haue I
 I say it now wepyng wiþ pitous vois
 Thay are enemys of cristes croys / 532
 Of which þe ende is deth wombe is her god
 O wombe / o bely . o stynkyng is þi cod
 Fulfild of dong / and of corrupcioun
 At eyþer ende of þe foul is þe soun 536
 how gret cost / and labour is þe to fynde /
 These cokes how þey stamp and streyn and grynde /
 And torne substaunce in to accident
 To fulfille / þy licorous talent 540
 Out of þe harde boones gete þay
 The mary for þay caste nouzt away
 That may go þurgh þe golet softe and soote
 Of spicery and leuys bark and roote 544
 Schal ben his sauce maad to his delyt/
 To make him haue a newe appetit
 But certes he þat haunteþ suche delices
 Is deed þer whiles þat he lyueþ in vices 548
 A licorous þing is wyn and dronkenesse
 Is ful of stryuyng and of wrecchednesse
 O dronke man disfigured is þi face
 Sour is þi breþ foul artow to embrace 552
 And þurgh þi dronkenesse sowneþ þe soun
 As þough þou seydest ay Sampson Sampson
 And ȝit god wot sampson drank neuer wyn
 Thou fallist as it were a stiked swyn 556
 Thy tonge is lost and al þin honest cure
 For dronkenes is verray sepulture
 Of mannes witt and his discrecioun
 In whom þat drynk hap dominacioun 560

He can no counseil kepe it is no drede
 Ne keep 3ow from þe white and from þe rede
 Namely fro þe white wyn of leepe
 That is to selle in Fleetstreet or in Chepe 564
 This wyn of Spayne crepith subtilly [leaf 180]
 In oþer wyne growyng faste by
 Of which þer riseth such fumosite /
 That whan a man hath dronke draughtes þre / 568
 And weneth þat he be at hom in Chepe
 He is in Spayne right at þe toun of lepe /
 Nought at þe Rochel ne at Burdeaux toun
 And þanne wol þai say Sampson Sampson . 572
 But herken lordyngs o word I 3ou pray /
 That alle þe souerayn actes dar I say
 Of victories in þe olde testament
 That þorough þe verray god omnipotent 576
 were doon in abstinence and in prayere /
 Lokith þe bible and þer 3e may it hie
 Loke atthila þe grete conquerour
 Deyd in his sleep with schame and dishonour 580
 Bleedyng ay at his nose in dronkenesse /
 A captayn schuld ay lyue in sobrenesse
 And ouer al this aryse 3ow right wel
 what was comaunded vnto lamuel 584
 Nought samuel but lamuel say I
 Redith þe bible and fyndeþ expresly
 Of wyn 3euyng / to hem þat han Iustice
 No more of þis for it may wel suffice 588
 And now I haue I-spoke of glotonye /
 Now wil I 3ow defende hasardrye
 ¶ Hasard is verray moder of lesynges
 And of decept of cursed forsweringes 592
 Blaspheme of crist manslaught and wast also /
 Of catel and of tyme . forther mo .
 It is reproef and contrair to honour
 For to be halde a comun hasardour - 596

And euer þe heyer he is of astaāt
 The more is he holden desolaāt
 If þat a prince vse hasardrie
 In alle gouernance and policie 600
 He is as by comun opinioun
 Holde þe lasse in reputacioun
 Stilbon þat was I-holde a wis embasitour [leaf 189, back]
 was sent in to Corinthe with gret honour 604
 Fro lacidome to make hir alliaunce
 And whan him cam him happede *par* chaunce /
 That alle þe grettest þat were of þat lond /
 Playing atte hasard he hem fond 608
 For which as soone as it mighte be
 He stal him hoom aȝein to his contre
 And saide ther I nyl nouȝt lese my name
 I nyl not take on me so gret diffame 612
 Ȝow for to allie vnto noon hasardoures /
 Sendeth oþerwise embasitoures
 For by my trouȝe me were leuer dye
 Than I Ȝow scholde / to hasardours allye / 616
 For ȝe þat ben so glorious in honoures
 Schal not allie Ȝow with hasardoures
 As by my wil / ne as by my trete
 This wise philosophre þus sayd he 620
 lo eek þat þe king Demetrius
 The king of Parthes as þe saith vs
 Sent him a paire dees of gold in scorn
 For he had vsed tauern þer toforn 624
 For which he held his gloir and his renoun
 At no valieu or reputacioun
 Lordes may fynde oþer maner play
 Honest ynough to dryue away þe day 628
 Now wol I speke of oþes fals and grete /
 A word or tuo as oþer bookes entrete
 Gret swering is a þing abhominable
 And fals swering is more reprouable 632

The hyhe god forbad sweryng^t at^t al /
 witnes on Mathew but^t in special
 Of sweryng^t saith þe holy Ieremye
 Thou schalt^t say soth þin oþes and not^t lye 636
 And swere in doom and eek^t in rightwisnes
 But^t ydel sweryng^t is a cursednes
 Bihold and se þer in þe firste table
 Of hihe goddes heste honorable / 640
 How þat^t þe secounde heste is this [leaf 190]
 Tak^t not^t in ydel ne his name amys
 Lo he rather forbedith such sweryng^t
 Than homicide or many a corsed þing^t 644
 I say as by order þus it stondith
 This knoweth he þat^t þe hestes vnderstondeth
 how þat^t þe second hest^t of god is that
 And forþermore I wol þe telle a plat^t 648
 The vegance schal not^t parte fro his hous
 That^t of his othes is outrageous
 By goddes precious hert^t and by his nayles
 And by þe blood of crist^t þat^t is in hayles 652
 Seuen is my chaunce and also cink^t and tray
 By goddis armes and þou falsly play
 This daggere schal þurgh þin herte goo
 This fruyt^t cometh of þe bicchid boones tuo 656
 Forswering^t Ire / falsnes homicide /
 Now for þe loue of crist^t þat^t for vs dyde
 leueth þoure othis boþe gret^t and smale
 But sires now wol I telle forþ my tale 660
 These riotours þre / of which I þou telle
 longe erst^t þan prime rong^t eny belle
 were set^t hem in a tauern for to drynke
 And as þay sat^t þay herd a belle clinke 664
 Biforn a corps was caried to þe graue
 That^t oon of hem gan calle vnto his knaue
 Go bet^t quop^t he and axe redily
 what^t corps is þat^t passeth her forþ by 668

And loke þou report his name wel
 Sire quod he but þat nedep neuer a del
 It was me told er ȝe com heer tuo houres
 He was *par* dy an old felaw of ȝoures 672
 And sodeinly he was I-slayn to night
 Fordronk as he sat on his bench vpright
 Ther com a priue thef men clepen deth
 That in þis contre al þe peple sleth 676
 And with his spere he smot his hert a tuo
 And went his way wiþoute wordes mo
 he hap a þousand slayn þis pestilence [leaf 190, back]
 And maister er ȝe come in his presence / 680
 Me pinkep þat it is ful necessarie /
 For to be war of such an aduersarie
 Beþ redy for to meete him euermore
 Thus taughte me my dame I say nomore 684
 By seinte mary sayde þe tauerner
 The child saiþ soþ for he hap slayn þis ȝeer
 Hens ouer a myle wiþinne a gret village
 Boþe man and womman. child and page 688
 I trowe his habitacioun be þere
 To ben auysed gret wisdom it were
 Er þat he dede a man þat dishonour
 ȝe goddis armes quod þis ryottour 692
 Is it such peril with him for to meete /
 I schal him seeke by way and eek by strete
 I make avow to goddis digne boones
 Herkneþ felaws we þre ben al oones 696
 let ech of vs hold vp his hond to other
 And ech of vs bycome oþeres broþer
 And we wil slee þis false traitour deth
 He schal be slayne/ that so many sleeth 700
 By goddis dignete er it be night
 Togideres han þese þre here trouþes plight
 To lyue and deye ech of he wiþ oþer
 As þough he were his oughne sworne broþer 704

And vp þai startyn al dronke in þis rage /
 And forþ þai goon towardeþ þatʼ village
 Of which þe tauerner haþ spoke biforn
 And many a grisly oth þan han þay sworn 708
 And cristes blessed body þay torent
 Deth schal be deed if þatʼ þay may him hent
 Rightʼ as þay wolde haue torned ouer a style
 whan þai han goon noughtʼ fully a myle 712
 An old man and a pore with hem mette
 This olde man ful mekely hem grette /
 And saide þus lordynges god 3ow se
 The proudestʼ of þe ryotoures þre 716
 Answerd aȝein. whatʼ carle wiþ meschaunce¹ [leaf 191]
 why artow al forwrapped saue þi face <sup>[¹ A blank line is in MS
after l. 717 and 718.]</sup>
 whi lyuestʼ þou in so gret an age
 This olde man gan loke on his visage 720
 And saide þus for þat I can not fynde /
 A man þough þatʼ I walke in to Inde
 Neiþer in Cite noon ne in village
 Thatʼ wol chaunge his ȝouþe for myn age 724
 And þerfore mootʼ I haue myn age stille /
 As longe tyme as it is goddes wille
 And deth allas ne wil not haue my lif
 Thus walkʼ I likʼ a resteles caytif 728
 And on þe ground which is my modres gate
 I knokke with my stafʼ erly and late
 And saye leeuē moder letʼ me In
 Lo how I wane fleisch. and blood and skyn 732
 Allas whan schuln my boones ben at restʼ
 Moder with 3ow wil I chaunge my chest/
 Thatʼ in my chamber. longe tyme haþ be
 3e for an haire clout/ to wrap in me 736
 Butʼ ȝetʼ to me sche wil notʼ do þatʼ grace
 For which ful pale and welkid is my face
 Butʼ sires to 3ow. it is no curtesye
 To speke vnto an old man vilonye 740

But he trespas in word or elles dede
 In holy writ þe may þour self wel rede
 Aȝens an old man hoor vpon his hede
 Þe schold arise wherefor I þow rede / 744
 Ne doth vnto an old man more harm now
 Na more þan þe wolde men dede to þow :
 In age . if þat þe may so long abyde
 And god be with þou / wher so þe go or ryde 748
 I moot go þider as I haue to goo
 Nay olde cherl by god thou schalt not so
 Sayde þat oper hasardour anoon
 Thou partist nouȝt so lightly by seint Iohn 752
 Thou spak right now of þat traytour dep [leaf 191, back]
 That in þis contre alle oure frendes slep
 Haue her my trouthe as þou art his aspye /
 Tel wher he is or elles þou schalt dye / 756
 By god and by þat holy sacrament/
 For soþly þou art oon of his assent
 To schewe vs ȝonge folk þe false theef
 Now sires þan if þat þow be so leef 760
 To fynde dep torn vp þis croked way
 For in þat groue I laft him by my fay
 Vnder a tree and þer he wil abyde
 Ne for þour best he nyl him no þing hyde 764
 Se þe þat ook right þer þe schuln him fynde
 God saue þow þat bought aȝein mankynde
 And þow amend þus sayde þis olde man
 And euerich of þese riotoures ran 768
 Til þay come to the tre and ther þay founde
 Of florins fyn of gold y-coyned rounde
 wel neygh a zeuen busshels as me thought
 No lenger þanne after dep þay sought 772
 But ech of hem so glad was of þat sight
 For þat þe florens so faire were and bright
 That doun þai sette hem by þat precious hord
 The ȝongest of hem spak / þe firste word 776

Breperen takeþ keep what I schal say
 My witte is gret þough þat I bourde and play
 This tresour hap fortune to vs ȝiuen
 In mirth and iolyte our lif to lyuen 780
 And lightly as it comth so wil we spende
 Ey goddis precious dignite who wende
 To day þat we schuld haue so fair a grace
 But might þis gold be caried fro þis place 784
 Hom to myn hous or ellis vnto ȝoures
 For wel I wot þat þis gold is nouȝt oures
 Than were we . in heyh feliceite
 But trewely by day it may not be 788
 Men wolde say þat we were þeues stronge /
 And for oure tresour doon vs for to honge
 This tresour moste caried be by night [leaf 192]
 As wysly and as slely as it might 792
 wherfore I rede þat cut among vs alle
 Be drawe and let se wher þe cut wil falle
 He þat hap þe cut wiþ herte bliþe/
 Schal renne to þe toun and þat ful swithe 796
 To bring vs bred and wyn ful priuely
 And tuo of vs schal kepe subtilly
 This tresour wel and if he wil not tarie
 whan it is night we wol þis tresour carie 800
 By oon assent þer as vs likeþ best/
 That oon of hem þe cut brought in his fest/
 And bad hem drawe and loke wher it wil falle
 And it fel on þe ȝongest of hem alle / 804
 And forþ toward þe toun he went anoon
 And al so soone as he was agoon
 That oon of hem . spak vnto þat oþer
 Thow wost wel þat þou art my sworne broþer 808
 Thy profyt wol I . telle þe anoon
 Thow wost wel þat our felaw is a-goon
 And her is gold and þat ful gret plente
 That schal departed be among vs þre / 812

But napeles if I can schape it so
 That it departed were bitwix vs tuo
 had I not doon a frendes torn to þe /
 That oþer answerd I not how þat may be/ 816
 he wot wel þat þe gold is wip vs tway
 what schulde we þan do what schuld we say
 Schal it be counsail sayde þe ferste schrewe
 And I schal telle þe in wordes fewe / 820
 what we schul doon and bringe it wel aboute
 I graunte quod þat other wipoute doute
 That by my troupe I wil þe nought bywray
 Now quod þe first þou wost wel we ben tway 824
 And two of vs schuln strenger be þan oon
 lok whanne he is sett and þat anoon
 Arys as þou woldest with him pleye
 And I schal ryf him thurgh þe sydes tweye 828
 whils þou strogelest wip him as in game [leaf 192, back]
 And with þi dagger loke þou do þe same
 And þan schal al þe gold departed be
 My dere frend bitwixe þe and me 832
 Than may we oure lustes fulfille
 And play at dees right at our owne wille
 And þus accorded ben þese schrewes twayn
 To sle þe þridde . as ȝe herd me sayn 836
 This ȝongest/ which þat wente to þe toun
 Ful fast in hert/ he rollith vp and doun
 The beaute of þe florins newe and bright
 O lord quod he if so were þat I might 840
 Haue al þis gold vnto my self alloone
 Ther is no man þat lyueth vnder þe troone
 Of gold þat schulde lyue so mery as I
 And atte last þe feend oure enemy 844
 Put in his pought þat he schuld poysozn beye
 wip which he mighte sle his felaws tweye
 For-why þe feend fond him in such lyuyng
 That he had leue to sorwe him to brynge 848

For þis witterly. was his entent
 To slen hem boþe and neuer to repent/
 And forth he goþ no lenger wold he tary
 In to þe toun vnto a potecary / 852
 And prayde him þat he him wolde selle
 Som poysoun þat he might his rattis quelle
 And eek þer was a polkat in his hawe /
 As he sayde his capouns had I-slawe / 856
 And said he wold him wreke if þat he might
 On vermyn þat destroyed him by night
 Thapotecary answerd and þou schalt haue
 A þing þat also god my soule saue 860
 In al þis world þer nys no creature
 That ete or dronk had of þis confecture
 Nought but þe mountaunce of a corn of whete
 That he ne schuld his lif anon forlete / 864
 3e sterue he schal and þat in lasse while
 Than þou wilt goon a paas not but a myle /
 The poysoun is so strong and violent [leaf 193]
 This cursed man hap in his hond I-hent 868
 This poysoun in a box & sins he ran
 In to þe nexte stret vnto a man
 And borwed him large botels þre
 And in þe two his poysoun poured he 872
 The þrid he keped clene for his drynke
 For al þe night he schop him for to swynke
 In caryng the gold out of þat place
 And whan þis riotour with sory grace 876
 had fillid with wyn his botels þre
 To his felaws aȝein repaireth he
 what nedith it to sermoun it more
 For right as þay had cast his deth bifore 880
 Right so þay han him slayn and þat anon
 And whan þis was I-doon þan spak þat oon
 Now let vs drynk and sitte and make vs mery
 And sippen we wil his body bery 884

And afterward it happed hem par cas
 To take þe botel þer þe poysoun was
 And drank and ȝaf his felaw drink also
 For which þay sterued boþe tuo 888
 But certes I suppose þat amycen
 wrot neuer in Canoun ne in non fen
 Mo wonder sorwes of empoisonyng
 Thus hadde þese wrecches tuo here endyng 892
 Thus endid been þese homicides tuo
 And eek þe fals empoysoner also /
 O cursed synne ful of cursednesse
 O traytorous homicidy o wikkednesse 896
 O glotony luxurie and hasardrye /
 Thou blasphemour of crist with vilanye
 And oþes grete of vsage and of pride
 Allas mankynde how may it bytyde 900
 Ther to þy creatour which þat þe wrought
 And wiþ his precious herte blood þe boughȝt
 Thou art so fals and so vnkynde allas
 Now good men god forȝeue ȝow ȝour trespas 904
 And ware ȝow fro þe synne of auarice [leaf 193, back]
 Myn holy pardoun may ȝou alle warice
 So þat ȝe offren noblis or starlinges
 Or elles siluer spones broches or rynges 908
 Bowiþ ȝour hedes vnder þis holy bulle
 Comeþ forþ ȝe wyues and offreþ ȝour wolle
 ȝour names I entre her in my rolle anon
 In to þe blis of heuen schul ȝe goon 912
 I ȝow assoile by myn heyh power
 If ȝe woln offre as clene and eek als cler
 As ȝe were born. and sires lo þus I preche /
 And Ihū crist þat is oure soules leche 916
 So graunte ȝow his pardoun to receyue
 For þat is best I wil not ȝow disceyue
 But sires o word forȝat I in my tale /
 I haue reliks and pardoun in my male / 920

As fair as eny man in Engelond
 which were me I-zeue by popes hond
 If eny of 3ow wol of deuocioun
 Offren and haue myn absolucioun 924
 Cometh forth anon knelith her a-doun
 And 3e schul haue here my pardoun
 Or elles takith pardoun as 3e wende
 Al newe and freissch at euery townes ende 928
 So pat 3e offren alway new and newe /
 Nobles and pens which pat ben good and trewe /
 It is an honour to every pat is heer
 That may haue a suffisaunt pardonner 932
 Tassoile 3ow in contre as 3e ryde
 For auentures which pat may bytyde
 For paraunter per may falle oon or tuo
 Doun of his hors and breke his nekke a-tuo 936
 loke such a seurete is to 3ou alle
 That I am in 3our felaschip I-falle
 That may assoyle 3ou bope more and lasse
 whan pat pe soule schal fro pe body passe 940
 I rede pat oure hoste schal bygynne
 For he is most enuoliped in synne
 Com forþ sire ost and offer first anoon [leaf 194]
 And þou schalt kisse pe reliquis euerichoon 944
 3e for a grote vnboele þi purs
 Nay nay quod he þan haue I cristes curs
 let be quod he it schal not be so theech
 Thou woldest make me kisse þin olde breech 948
 And swere it were a relik of a seynt
 Though it were wiþ þi foundement depeynt
 But by pe cros which pat seynt heleyne fond
 I wold I had þy coylons in myn hond 952
 In stede of reliks or of seintuary /
 let cut hem of I wol help hem to cary
 Thay schul be schryned in an hogges tord
 This pardonner answerde nat o word 956

So wroþ he was he wolde no word say
 Now quod oure host I wol no lenger play
 wiþ þe ne with noon oþer angry man
 But right anoon þis worthy knight bygan 960
 whan þat he saugh þat al þe peple lough
 No more of þis for it is right ynough
 Sir pardoner be glad and mery of cheere
 And 3e sir host þat ben to me so deere 964
 I pray 3ow þat 3e kisse þe pardoner
 And pardoner I pray 3ow draweþ 3ow ner
 And as we dede let vs laugh and play
 Anoon þay kisse and riden forþ her way / 968
 ¶ Here endeth þe pardoneres tale

[*No break in the MS.*]

GROUP B. (β. FRAGMENT III.)

§ 4. THE SHIPMAN'S TALE.

¶ Here bygynneth þe Schipman his tale/

A Marchaunt^t whilom dwelled at^t seint Denys
 That^t riche was for which men hild him wys
 A wyf^t he had of^t excellent^t beaute
 And companable and reuerent^t was sche
 which is a þing^t þat causeth more despence
 Than worth is al þe cher and reuerence 1196
 That^t men doon hem at^t festes or at daunces
 Such salutaciouns and continuaunces
 Passeth as doþ þe schadow on a wal
 But^t wo is him þat^t paye moot^t for al 1200
 The sely housbond algaþ^t moste pay [leaf 194, back]
 He most^t vs cloþe . in ful good array
 Al for his oughne worschip richely
 In which array we daunce iolily 1204
 And if^t þat^t he may not^t parauenture
 Or elles wil not^t such dispens endure
 But^t þynkeþ it is wasted and I-lost^t
 Than moot^t anoþer paye for oure cost^t 1208
 Or lene vs gold and þat^t is perilous
 The worþy marchaunt^t huld a noble hous/
 For which he hadde alday gret^t repair
 For his largesce and for his wyf^t was fair 1212
 what^t wonder is but herkneþ to my tale
 Amonges al þese gestes gret^t and smale /
 Ther was a monk^t a fair man and a bold
 I trowe pritty wynter he was old 1216
 That^t euer in oon was drawyng^t to þat place /
 This 3onge monk^t þat^t was so fair of^t face

Aqueynted was so wiþ þe goode man
 Siþ þat her firste knowleche bygan 1220
 That in his hous as familier was he /
 As it possibil is a frend to be
 And for as mochil as þis goode man
 And eek þis monk of which þat I bygan 1224
 were boþe tuo I-born in oon village /
 The monk him claymeth as for cosynage
 And he aȝein he saith nat oones nay
 But was as glad þer of as foul of day 1228
 For to his hert it was a gret plesaunce /
 Thus ben þay knyht wiþ eterne alliaunce
 And ilk of hem gan oþer to assure /
 Of broþerhed whil þat her lif may dure 1232
 Fre was daun Iohn and manly of despence /
 As in þat hous and ful of diligence
 To do plesaunce and also gret costage
 He nought forȝat to ȝeue þe leste page 1236
 In al þat hous but after her degre /
 He ȝaf þe lord and sippen þe meyne /
 whan þat he com som maner honest þing^[leaf 195]
 For which þay were as glad of his comyng^t 1240
 As foul is fayn. whan þat þe sonne vpriseþ
 No mor of þis as now for it suffiseþ
 But so bifel þis marchaunt on a day /
 Schop him to make redy his array 1244
 Toward þe toun of Bruges for to fare /
 To byen þer a porcioun of ware
 For which he hath to paris sent anoon
 A messenger and prayed had dan Iohn 1248
 That he schuld come to seint Denys and play
 with him and wiþ his wyf a day or tway
 Er he to brigges went. in alle wise
 This nobil monk of which I ȝow deuyse 1252
 Hap of his abbot as him list licence
 By cause he was a man of heih prudence

And eek^t an officer out/ for to ryde /
 To se her graunges and her bernys wyde / 1256
 And vnto seint denys he comeþ anoon
 who was so welcome as my lord dan Iohñ
 Oure deere cosyn ful of^t curtesie /
 with him brought^t he a Iubbe of^t maluesie 1260
 And eek/ anoþer ful of^t wyn vernage
 And volantlyn as ay was his vsage
 And þus I lete hem ete and drynk^t and play
 This marchaunt^t and þis monk^t a day or tway 1264
 The þridde day þis marchaund vp he riseth
 And on his needes sadly him auyseth
 And vp in to his countour hous goþ he
 To rekyn wiþ himself^t as wel may be / 1268
 Of þilke 3er how þat^t it with him stood
 And how þat^t he dispended had his good
 And if^t þat^t he encrested were or noon
 His bookes and his bagges many oon 1272
 He haþ byforn him on his counter bord
 For riche was his tresor and his hord
 For which ful fast^t his countour dore he schette
 And eek^t he wolde no man schold him lette 1276
 Of his accomptes for þe mene tyme / [leaf 195, back]
 And þus he sat^t til it was passed prime
 Dan Iohñ was risen in þe morn also
 And in the gardyn walkith to and fro 1280
 And haþ his þinges said ful curteisly
 This good wyf^t com walkyng^t ful priuely
 In to a gardyn þer he walkeþ softe
 And him saluþ as sche haþ doon ful ofte 1284
 A mayde child com in hir compaignie
 which as hir list^t sche may gouerne and gye
 For 3it^t vnder þe 3erde was þe mayde
 O dere cosyn myn dan Iohñ sche sayde 1288
 what^t ayleþ 3ow so raþe to arise
 Nece quod he it aught^t ynough suffise

Fyue houres for to slepe a night
 But it were for eny old palled wight 1292
 As ben þese weddid men þat lye and dare
 As in a forme liþ a very hare
 were al forstraught with houndes gret and smale
 But dere nece why be ȝe so pale / 1296
 I trowe certis þat oure goode man
 hath on ȝow laborid sith þe night bygan
 That ȝow were nede to resten hastiliche
 And with þat word he lowgh ful meriliche 1300
 And of his owne þought he was al reed
 This faire wyf bygan to schake hir heed
 And sayde þus ȝe god wot al quod sche /
 Nay cosyn myn it stant not so wiþ me 1304
 For by þat god þat ȝaf me soule and lif
 In al þe reme of Fraunce is þer no wif
 That lasse lust haþ to þat sory play
 For I may synge / allas and waylaway 1308
 That I was born but to no wight quod sche
 Dar I not telle how it stont wiþ me
 Wherfor I þink out of þis lond to wende
 Or elles of my self to make an ende 1312
 So ful am I of drede and eek of care
 This monke bygan vpon þis wif to stare
 And sayd allas my nece god forbede [leaf 196]
 That ȝe for eny sorw or eny drede / 1316
 Fordo ȝour self but telleþ me ȝour greef
 Paraenture I may in ȝoure mescheef
 Councel or help and þerfor telleþ me
 Al ȝour annoy for it schal be secre 1320
 For on my portos I make an oth
 That neuer in my lif for lief ne loþ
 Schal I of no counseil ȝou bywray
 The same aȝein quod sche to ȝow I say 1324
 By god and by þis portos wil I swere
 Though men me wolde al in peces tere

Ne schal I neuer for to go to helle /
 Bywreye word. of þing^t þat^t ȝe me telle 1328
 Not^t for no cosynage ne alliaunce
 But^t verrayly for loue and affiaunce
 Thus ben þay sworn and her-vpon I-kist^t
 And ilk^t of^t hem told oþer what^t hem list^t 1332
 Cosyn quod sche if^t þat^t I had a space /
 As I haue noon and namly in þis place
 Then wold I telle a legend of^t my lyf^t
 what^t I haue suffred siþ I was a wyf^t 1336
 wiþ myn housbond þough he be ȝour cosyn
 Nay quod þis monk^t by god and seint martyn
 He is no more cosyn vnto me
 Than is þis leef^t þat^t hongep^t on þe tre 1340
 I clepid him so by seint^t Denis of^t Fraunce
 To haue þe more cause of^t acqueyntaunce
 Of^t ȝow which I haue loued specially
 Abouen alle wommen sikerly 1344
 This swere I ȝow on my professioun
 Tellith ȝoure greef^t lest^t þat^t he come a doun
 And hasteth ȝow and goþ ȝour way anon
 My deere loue quod sche. O dan Iohn 1348
 Ful leef^t me were þis counseil to hyde
 But^t out^t it moot^t it may no more abyde
 Myn housbond is to me þe worste man
 That^t euer was siþþe þe world bigan 1352
 But siþ I am a wif^t it sit nough^t me [leaf 196, back]
 To telle eny wight of^t oure priuete
 [. no gap in the MS.]
 God schilde I scholde telle it for his grace / 1356
 A wyf^t ne schal not^t say of^t hir housbonde
 But^t al honour as I can vnderstonde
 Saue vnto ȝow þus moche telle I schal
 As help me god he is not^t worþ at^t al 1360
 In no degre þe valieu of^t a flie
 But^t ȝit^t me greueth most^t his nigardye

And wel 3e wot þat wymmen naturelly
 Desiren sixe þinges as wel as I 1364
 They wolde þat here housbondes scholde be
 hardy and wys and riche and fre /
 And buxom to his wyf and freisch on bedde
 But by þe lord þat for vs alle bledde 1368
 For his honour my seluen to array
 A sonday next comyng 3it most I pay
 An hundred frank or elles I am lorn
 3it were me leuer þat I were vnborn 1372
 Than me were doon a slaunder or vilenye .
 And if myn housbond eek might it espie
 I ner but lost and þerfor I 3ow pray
 [. 1376

 *no gap in the MS.*]
 For a certein day I wol 3ow pay 1380
 And do to 3ow what pleasaunce and seruise
 That I may do right as 3ou list deuyse
 And but I do god take on me vengeance
 As foul as hadde Geneloun of Fraunce 1384
 This gentil monk answard in þis manere
 Now trewely myn owne lady deere /
 I haue on 3ow so gret pite and reuthe /
 That I 3ow swere and plichte 3ow my treuþe 1388
 That whan 3our housbond is to Flaundres fare
 I schal deliuer 3ow out of 3oure care
 For I wol bringe 3ow an hundred frankes /
 And with þat word he caught hir by þe schankes 1392
 And hir embraced hard and kist hir ofte
 Goth now 3our way quod he al stille and softe /
 And let vs dyne as sone as 3e may
 For by my chilindre it is prime of day [leaf 197] 1396
 Goth now and beth as trew as I schal be /
 Now elles god forbede sire quod sche /

And forþ sche goth as ioly as a pye /
 And bad þe cookes þat þai schold hem hye / 1400
 So þat men myghte dyne and þat anoon
 vp to hir housbond þis wif is goon
 And knockeþ at / his dore boldely
 Qy la quod he. peter it am I 1404
 Quod sche how longe sire wol 3e fast
 how longe tyme wol 3e reken and cast
 3our sommes and 3our bokes and 3our þinges /
 The deuel haue part of alle such rekenynges 1408
 3e haue I-nough par dy of goddes sonde /
 Com down to day and let 3our bagges stonde
 Ne be 3e not aschamed that Daun Iohn
 Schal al day fastyng þus elenge goon 1412
 what let vs hiere masse and gowe dyne
 wif quod þis man litel canstow diuine
 The curious besynesse þat we haue
 For of vs chapmen so god me saue 1416
 And by þat lord that cleped is seint Iue
 Scarsly among twelue two schuln priue
 Continuelly lastyng in to her age
 we may wel make cheer and good visage 1420
 And dryue forth þe world as it may be
 And kepen our estat in priuete
 Til we be deed or elles þat we play
 A pilgrimage or goon out of þe way 1424
 And perfor haue I / gret necessite
 Vpon þis queynte world to auyse me
 For euermor we moste stond in drede
 Of hap and fortun / in our chapmanhede 1428
 To Flaundres to morw at day
 And come agayn as soone as I may
 For which my deere wif I þe byseeke
 And be to euery wight buxom and meeke 1432
 And for to kepe oure good be curious
 And honestly gouerne wel our hous

[Leaf 197, back]

Thou hast ynough in every maner wise
 That to a thrifty housbond may suffise 1436
 The lakkeþ noon array ne no vitaile
 Of siluer in þy purs þou mayst not faile
 And with þat word his contour dore he schitte
 And doun he goþ no lenger wold he lette 1440
 And hastily a masse was þer sayd
 And spedily þe tables were I-layd
 And to þe dyner faste þay hem spedde /
 And rychely þis Chapman þe monk fedde / 1444
 And after dyner daun Iohñ sobrelly
 This chapman took on part and priuely /
 Sayd him þus. cosyn it stondesth so
 That wel I se to brigges wol 3e go / 1448
 God and seint austyn spede 3ou and gyde /
 I pray 3ow cosyn wisly þat 3e ryde
 Gouverneth 3ow also of 3our diete
 Al temperelly and namely in þis hete 1452
 Bitwix vs tuo nedeth no straunge fare
 Far wel cosyn. god schilde 3ou fro care
 If eny þing þer be by day or night
 If it lay in my power and my might 1456
 That 3e wil me comaunde in eny wise
 It schal be doon right as 3e wol deuyse /
 O thing er þat 3e goon if it might be /
 I wolde pray 3ow for to lene me 1460
 An hundred frankes for a wyke or tweye
 For certeyn bestis þat I moste beye /
 To store with a place þat is oures
 God help me so I wolde it were 3oures 1464
 I schal not faile seurlly of my day
 Nought for a þousand frankes a myle way
 But let þis þing be secre I 3ow pray /
 For for þe bestis þis night most I pay 1468
 And fare now wel myn owne cosyn deere
 Graunt mercy of 3our cost and of 3our cheere

This noble marchauzt^t gentilly anoon
 Answerd and sayde. O cosyn daun Iohn [leaf 198] 1472
 Now sikerly þis is a smal request
 My gold is 3oures whanne þat^t 3ow lest/
 And nough^t oonly gold but^t my chaffare /
 Tak^t what^t 3ow liste / god schilde 3e spare 1476
 But^t oon þing^t is 3e know it^t wel ynough
 Of chapmen þat^t her money is here plough
 we may creauunce whils we haue a name
 But^t goldles for to be it is no game 1480
 Pay it agayn whan it liþ in 3our ese /
 After my might^t ful fayn wold I 3ow plese /
 This hundred frankes he fet^t forth anoon
 And priuely he took^t hem to daun Iohn 1484
 No wight^t in al þis world wist^t of^t þis loone
 Sauyng^t þe marchaund and dan Iohn alloone
 Thay drynke & speke and rome a while and play
 Til þat^t dan Iohn rydeþ to his abbay 1488
 The morwe cam and forth þe marchaund rideth
 To Flaundes-ward his prentis wel him gydeth
 Til þat^t he cam to Brigges merily
 Now goth þis marchaund faste and busily 1492
 Aboute his neede and bieth and creauunceth
 He neither pleyeth atte dys ne daunceþ
 But^t as a marchaund schortly for to telle
 he lad his lyf^t / and þer I let^t him duelle 1496
 The sonday next^t þe marchaund is agoon
 To seint^t denys I-come is daun Iohn
 with croune and berd al freisch and newe I-schaue
 In al þe hous þer nas so litel a knaue 1500
 Ne no wight^t elles þat^t he nas ful fayn
 For þat^t my lord dan Iohn was come agayn
 And schortly to þe poynte for to gon
 This faire wif^t acordith with dan Iohn 1504
 That^t for þese hundred frank^t he schuld al night^t
 Haue hir in his armes bolt/ vpright^t

And þis acord parformed was in dede /
 In mirth al night a bisy lif þay lede / 1508
 Til it was day þat dan Iohñ went his way
 And bad þe meigne far wel haue good day [leaf 198, back]
 For noon of hem ne no wight in þe toun
 Hath of dan Iohñ right noon suspeccioun 1512
 And forth he rideth hom to his abbay
 Or wher him list / no more of him I say /
 ¶ This marchaund whan þat endid was þe faire
 To seynt denys. he gan to repeire / 1516
 And with his wif he makeþ fest and cheere
 And tellith hir þat chaffar is so deere
 That needes most he make a cheuisaunce
 For he was bounde in a reconisaunce 1520
 To paye twenty þousand scheldes anoon
 For which þis marchaund is to paris goon
 To borwe of certeyn frendes þat he hadde /
 A certein frankes and some with him he ladde / 1524
 And whan þat he was come in to þe toun
 For gret chiertee and gret affeccioun
 Vnto Dan Iohñ he first goth him to play
 Nought for to borwe of him no kyn monay 1528
 But for to wite and se of his wel fare
 And for to telle him of his chaffare
 As frendes doon whan þay ben met in fere
 Dan Iohñ him maketh fest and mery cheere 1532
 And he him told agayn ful specially
 How he had bought right wel and graciously
 Thanked be god / al his marchaundise
 Saue þat he most in alle maner wise / 1536
 Maken a cheuyssauns as for his best
 And þan he schulde be in ioie and rest
 Dan Iohñ answerde certis I am fayn
 That ȝe in hele are comen hom agayn 1540
 And if þat I were riche as haue I blisse
 Of twenty þousand scheld schuld ȝe not mysse

For 3e so kyndely þis oper day
 lente me gold and as I can and may 1544
 I þanke 3ow by god and by seint Iame /
 But napeles I took it to oure dame
 3oure wif þe same gold a3ein
 vpon 3our bench. sche wot it wel certeyn [leaf 199] 1548
 By certein toknes þat I can hir telle
 Now by 3our leue I may no lenger duelle
 Oure abbot wol out of toun anon
 And in his compaignye moot I goon 1552
 Grete wel oure dame my nece swete
 And far wel dere cosyn til þat we meete
 This marchaund which þat was boþe war and wys /
 Creaunced hap and payed eek in parys/ 1556
 To certeyn lombardes redy in her hond
 This somme of gold and took of hem his bond
 And hom he goþ a mery as a popin iay
 For wel he knew he stood in such array 1560
 That needes most he wyne in such viage
 A þousand frankes aboue al his costage
 His wyf redy mette him at þe gate
 As sche was wont of old usage algate 1564
 And al þat night in mirþe þay ben sette
 For he was riche and clerly out of dette
 whan it was day þis marchaund gan embrace
 his wyf al newe and kist hir on hir face 1568
 And vp he goth and maked it ful tough
 No more quod sche by god 3e haue ynough
 And wantounly with him sche lay and playde
 Till atte laste þus þis marchaund sayde 1572
 By god quod he I am a litel wroþ
 with 3ow my wyf alþough it be me loth
 And wite 3e why by god as þat I gesse
 3e han I-maad a maner straungenesse / 1576
 Bitwixe me and my cosyn dan Iohn
 3e schold haue warned me er I had goon

That he 3ow had an hundred frankes payd
 By redy tokne and huld him euel appayd 1580
 For þat I to him spak of cheuysaunce
 Me semed so as by his countenaunce
 But napeles by god of heuen king
 I þoughe noughȝt to axe him no þing 1584
 I pray þe wif do no more so
 Tel me alway er þat I fro þe go [leaf 199, back]
 If eny dettour haue in myn absence
 I-payd þe lest in þy neegligence 1588
 I may him axe a þing þat he haþ payed
 This wyf was not affered ne affrayed
 But holly sche sayde and þat anoon
 Mary I diffy þat false monk dan Ioħn 1592
 I kepe not of his tokenes neuer a del
 he took me a certeyn gold/ þat wot I wel
 what euel thedom on his monkes snowte/
 For god it wot I wende wiþoute doute 1596
 That he had 3eue it me by cause of 3ow
 To do þer with myn honour and my prow
 For cosynage and eek for bele cheer
 That he haþ had ful ofte tyme heer 1600
 But synnes þat I stonde in þis disioynt
 I wol answer 3ow schortly to þe poynt
 3e han mo slakke dettours þan am I
 For I wol pay 3ow wel and redily 1604
 Fro day to day and if so be I faile
 I am 3our wif score it vpon my taile
 And I schal paye it as soone as I may
 For by my troupe I haue on myn array 1608
 And noughȝt on wast bistowed it euery del
 And for I haue bistowed it so wel
 To 3oure honour for goddes sake I say
 As beþ noughȝt wroþ but let vs laugh and play / 1612
 3e schul my ioly body haue to wedde/
 By god I wol not pay 3ow but on bedde /

Forȝeue it me myn owne spouse deere /	
Turne hiderward and make better cheere	1616
This marchaund saugh noon oþer remedy	
And for to chide. it nas but foly	
Sip þat þe þingt may not amendid be /	
wif he sayde / and I forȝiue it þe	1620
But by þi lif ne be no more so large	
keep better my good þis ȝiue I þe in charge	
Thus endeþ now my tale and god vs sende	
Talyngt ynough vnto our lyues ende / Amen /	1624

[Foot of page. No other break in the MS.]

WEl sayd by corpus boones quod oure host' [leaf 200]
 Now longe mot' þou sayle by þe cost'
 Sir gentil maister gentil mariner
 God ȝiue þe monk' a þousand last' quadeȝer 1628
 haha felaws be war for such a iape
 The monk' put' in þe mannes hood an ape
 And in his wyues eek' by seint' austyn
 Drawen no monkes more vnto ȝour In 1632
 But' now pasouer and let' vs loke aboute
 who schal telle first' of' al þis route /
 Anoper tale / and wiþ þat' wiþ þat' word he sayde /
 As curteisly as it had ben a mayde / 1636
 My lady prioresse by ȝour leue
 So þat' I wist' I scholde ȝow not greue
 I wolde deme þat' ȝe telle scholde
 A tale next' if' so were þat' ȝe wolde / 1640
 Now wol ȝe vouche sauf' my lady deere /
 Gladly quod sche / and sayd in þis manere

[*Break of one line in the MS.*]

[THE PROEM.]

O Lord oure lord þy name how merueylous ¶ *Domine dominus noster.*
Is in þis large world I-sprad quod sche
For noughȝt oonly þy laude precious

Parformed is by men ofȝ heih degre
Butȝ by mouthes ofȝ children þy bounte ¶ *Ex ore infancium* 1647
Parformed is on oure brestȝ soukyngȝ
Som tyme schewe þay þin heriyngȝ 1649

[*No stanza-breaks in the MS.*]

Wherfore in laude as I bestȝ can or may 1650
Of þe and ofȝ þy white lily flour
which þatȝ þe bar and is a mayde alway
To telle a story I wil do my labour
Noughȝtȝ þatȝ I may encresee ȝoure honour 1654
For sche hir silfȝ / is honour and roote
Of bounte nextȝ hir sone and soules boote / 1656

O modir mayde . O mayde mooder fre / 1657
O bussȝ vnbrentȝ brennyngȝ in Moises sightȝ
Thatȝ rauysshedestȝ / doun fro þe deite
Thurȝȝ þin humblesse þe gostȝ þat in þe alighȝtȝ
Of whos vertu he in þin herte pigȝ 1661
Conceyued was þe fadres sapience [leaf 200, back]
help me to telle it in þy reuerence 1663

Lady þi bounte and þy magnificence 1664
Thy vertu and þi gretȝ humilite
Ther may no tonge expres in no science
For som tyme lady er men pray to þe /
Thow gostȝ biforn ofȝ þy benignite 1668
And getistȝ vs þe lightȝ þurȝ þy prayere /
To gyden vs þe way to þy sone sone so deere / 1670

My connyng^t is to weyk^t o blisful queene 1671
 For to declare þy grete worþinesse
 That I may not þis in my wyt susteene
 But as a child of twelf^t month old or lesse
 Than can vnnethes eny word expresse 1675
 Right^t so fare I and þerfor I 3ou pray
 Endith my song^t þat I schal of 3ow say 1677

[*A break of one line in the MS.*]

[THE TALE.]

THer was in aey in a greet^t Citee 1678
 Amonges cristen folk^t a Iewerye
 Susteyned by a lord of þat^t contre
 For foul vsure and lucre of felonye /
 Hateful to crist^t and to his compaignye / 1682
 And þurgh þe strete men might^t ride and wende /
 For it^t was fre and open at euerich ende 1684

A litel scole of cristen folk^t þer stood 1685
 Doun at þe forþer ende in which þer were
 Children an heep ycomen of cristes blood
 That lered in þat^t scole 3er by 3ere
 Such maner doctrine as men vsed þere 1689
 This is to say to synge and to rede
 As smale childer doon in her childhede / 1691

Among^t þese children was a widow sone 1692
 A litel clergeoun þat seue 3er was of age
 That day by day to scole was his wone
 And eek^t also wher-so he saugh þymage
 Of cristes moder had he in vsage 1696
 As him was taught^t to knele a doun and say /
 His Aue maria as he goþ by þe way [*leaf 201*] 1698

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GROUP B. § 6. PRIORESS'S TALE. Harleian 7334.	461
Thus haþ þis widow hir litel child I-taught	1699
Oure blisful lady cristes moder deere	
To worschip ay and he forȝat it nought	
For cely child wil alway soone leere	
But ay whan I remembre of þis matiere	1703
Seint Nicholas stont euer in my presence	
For he so ȝong to crist dede reuerence	1705
This litil child his litel book lernynge	1706
As he sat in þe scole at his primere	
He O alma redemptoris herde synge/	
As children lerned her antiphonere	
And as he durst he drough hem ner and neere	1710
And herked euer þe wordes and þe note	
Til he þe firste vers couþe al by rote	1712
Nought wist he what þis latyn was to say /	1713
For he so ȝong and tender was of age	
But on a day his felaw gan he pray /	
To expoun him þe song in his langage/	
Or telle him what þis song was in vsage /	1717
This prayd he him to construe and declare	
Ful often tyme vpon his knees bare /	1719
His felaw which þat elder was þan he	1720
Answerd him þus. þis song I. haue herd seye	
was maked of our blisful lady fre	
Hire to saluen and eek hire to preye	
To ben our help and socour whan we deye	1724
I can no more expoun in this matere	
I lerne song I can no more gramer	1726
And is þis song I-maad in reuerence	1727
Of cristes moder sayde þis Innocent	
Now certes I wol do my diligence	
To conne it al er cristemasse be went	

Though þat I for my primer schal be schent / 1731
 And schal be betyn þries in an hour
 I wol it conne oure lady to honoure 1733

His felaw taught him homward priuely 1734
 From day by day til he couþe it by rote
 And þan he song it wel and boldely *[leaf 201, back]*
 Twyes on þe day it passed þurgh his þrote
 From word to word accordyng to þe note 1738
 To scoleward and homward whan he went
 On cristes moder was set al his entent 1740

As I haue sayd þurghout þe Iewrye 1741
 This litel child as he cam to and fro
 Ful merily þan wold he synge and crie /
 O alma Redemptoris euer mo
 The swetnes hap his herte persed so 1745
 Of cristes moder that to hir to pray
 he can not stynt of syngyng by þe way / 1747

Oure firste foo þe serpent Sathanas 1748
 That hath in Iewes hert his waspis nest
 Vpswal and sayde / o ebreik peple allas
 Is þis a þing to 3ow þat is honest
 That such a boy schal walken as him lest 1752
 In 3oure despyt and synge of such sentence
 which is a3ens 3our lawes reuerence 1754

Fro þennes forth þe Iewes han conspired 1755
 This Innocent out of þis world to enchace
 An homicide þer to han 3e þay hired
 That in an aley had a priue place
 And as þe childe gan forþ by to pace 1759
 This false iewe him hent and huld ful faste /
 And kut his þrote and þrewe him in atte laste 1761

I say in a wardrobe þay him þrew 1762

wher as the Iewes purgen her entraile

O cursed folk! O herodes al newe

what! may þour euyl entente þou auaille

Morther wol out certeyn it wil nough! faile 1766

And namly þer þonour of! god schuld sprede

The blood out crieþ on þour cursed dede / 1768

O martir soudit to Virginite 1769

Now maystow synge folowyng! euer in oon

The white lomb celestial quod sche /

Of! which þe grete euaungelist! seint! Iohn

In pathmos wroot! which seith þat þay goon 1773

Bifore þe lamb and synge a song! al newe

[leaf 202]

That! neuer fleischly wommen þay knewe 1775

This pore widowe wayteþ al þis night! 1776

After þis litel child but he cometh nough!

For which as soone as it! was dayes light!

with face pale in drede and busy þough!

Sche haþ at scole and elles-wher him sought 1780

Til fynally sche gan of! hem aspye

That! he was last/ seyn in þe Iewerie 1782

With moodres pite in hir brest! enclosed 1783

Sche goþ as sche were half! out! of! hir mynde

To euery place wher sche haþ supposed

By liklihede hir child for to fynde

And euer on cristes mooder meke and kynde 1787

Sche cried and atte laste þus sche wrought!

Among! þe cursed Iewes sche him sought! 1789

Sche freyned and sche prayed pitously 1790

To euery Iew þat! dwelled in þat! place

To telle hir if! hir child wente þer by

Thay sayden nay but Ihu of! his grace

3af' in hir þough't wipinne a litel space 1794
 That in þat place after hir sone sche cryde
 wher as he was cast' in a put besyde / 1796

O grete god þat' parformedist' þin laude 1797
 by mouth of Innocent; lo here þy might'
 This gemme of' chastite þis emeraude
 And eek' of' martirdom þe ruby bright'
 Ther he with þrote I-kut' lay vpright 1801
 He . Alma redemptoris gan to synge
 So lowde þat' al þe place bigan to rynge 1803

The cristen folk' þat' þurgh þe strete went/ 1804
 In comen for to wonder vpon þis þing'
 And hastily for the prouost' þay sent
 He cam anon wipoute taryng'
 And heriede crist þat' is of' heuen kyng' 1808
 And eek' his moder honour of' mankynde
 And after þat' þe Iewes let' he bynde 1810

This child with pitous lamentacioun 1811
 vp taken was syngyng his song' alway [l. 1f 2^o2, back]
 And with honour of' gret processioun
 Thay caried him vnto þe next' abbay
 His modir swownyng' by þe beere lay 1815
 Vneþe might' þe poeple þat' was þere
 This newe Rachel bringe fro þe beere 1817

With torment and with schamful deth echon 1818
 This prouost' doþ þese Iewes for to sterue
 That' of' þis moerder wist and þat' anon
 he wolde no such cursednesse obserue
 Euel schal haue þat' euyl wol deserue 1822
 Therefore with wilde hors he dede hem drawe
 And after þat' he heng' hem by þe lawe 1824

Vpon his beere ay lith þis Innocent 1825
Biforn þe chief auter whiles þe masse last
And after þat þabbot with his couent
Hap sped him for to burie him ful fast
And whan þay halywater on him cast 1829
3et' spak' þis child. whan spreynde was þe water
And song' O alma redemptoris mater 1831

This abbot which þat was an holy man 1832
As monkes ben or elles oughte be
This 3onge child to coniure he bigan
And sayd O deere child I halse þe
In vertu of þe holy trinite 1836
Tel me what is þy cause for to synge
Sith þat þy throte is kit at my semynge 1838

My prote is kit vnto my nekke boon 1839
Sayde þis child and as by way of kynde
I schulde han ben deed long tyme a goon
But Ihū crist' as 3e in bookes fynde
wol þat' his glorie laste and be in mynde 1843
And for þe worschip of his moder deere
3et' may I synge. O alma lowde and cleere 1845

This welle of mercy cristes moder swete 1846
I loued alway as after my connynge
And whan þat I my lyf schulde leete
To me sche cam and bad me for to synge
This antym verrailly in my deyinge [leaf 203] 1850
As 3e haue herd and whan þat I had songe
Me þought' sche layde a grayn vnder my tonge 1852

Werfor I synge and synge moot certeyne 1853
In honour of þat blisful mayden fre
Til fro my tonge taken is þe greyne
And after þat þus saide sche to me

My litil child now wil I fecche þe 1857
 whan þat þe grayn is fro þi tonge I-take
 Be nought agast I wol þe nought forsake 1859

This holy monk this abbot him mene I 1860
 His tonge out caught and took away þe greyn
 And he 3af vp þe gost ful softly
 And whan þe abbot hath þis wonder seyn
 His salte teres striken doun as reyn 1864
 And gruf he fel a doun vnto þe grounde
 And stille he lay as he had ben y-bounde 1866

The couent eek lay on þe paupment 1867
 wepyng and heryng cristes moder deere
 And after þat þay rise and forþ þay went
 And took away þis martir fro his beere /
 In a tombe of marble stooncs cleere 1871
 Enclosed þay þis litil body sweete
 Ther he is now god leue vs for to meete 1873

O 3onge hughe of lyncofn slayn also 1874
 wip cursed iewes as it is notable /
 For it nys but a litel while ago
 Pray eek for vs we synful folk vnstable
 That of his mercy god so merciablc 1878
 On vs his grete mercy multiplie
 For reuerence of his modir marie Amen 1880

[No break in the MS.]

W han sayd was þis miracle euery man 1881
 As sober was þat wonder was to se
 Til þat oure host to iape bigan

And þan at erst/ he loked vpon me
 And sayde þus what man art þou quod he 1885
 Thou lokest as þou woldest fynde an hare
 For euer vpon þe ground I se þe stare / 1887

Approche ner and loke merily [leaf 203, back] 1888
 Now ware þou sires and let þis man haue space
 He in þe wast is schape as wel as I
 This were a popet in an arm to embrace
 For any womman smal and fair of face / 1892
 He semeth eluisch by his countenaunce
 For vnto no wight doth he daliaunce 1894

Say now som what sins other folk han said 1895
 Telle vs a tale and þat of mirthe anoon
 host quod I ne beþ nought euel apayd
 For other tale certes can I noon
 But of a rym I lerned þore agoon 1899
 3e þat is good quod he now schul we heere
 Som deynte þing me þinketh by his cheere 1901

[Break of 1 line in the MS.]

[*No stanza-gaps are in the MS., and no lines are inset.*]

[*The First Fit.*]

L Esteneþ lordyngs. in good entent ^t	
And I wol telle verrayment ^t	
Of myrthe and solas	1904
Of a knyght ^t was fair and gent	
In batail and in tornament	
His name was sir Thopas	1907
I-bore he was in fer countre	
In Flaundres al byþonde þe se	
At Popyryng ^t in þe place	1910
His fader was a man ful fre	
And lord he was of þat ^t contre	
As it was goddes grace	1913
Sir Thopas wax a doughty swayn	
why ^t was his face as payndemayn	
His lippes reed as Rose /	1916
His rode is lik / scarlet ^t en grayn	
And I ȝow telle in good certayn	
He had a semly nose	1919
His heer his berd was lik / safroun	
That ^t to his girdil raught ^t a doun	
His schoon of Cordewane	1922
Of Brigges were his hosen broun	
His robe was of Sicladoun	
That ^t coste many a Iane	1925

[*leaf 204*]

He coupe hunt' at wilde deer
 And ride on haukyng' for ryuer
 with gray goshauk' on honde 1928
 Therto he was a good archeer
 Of' wrastelyng' was noon his peer
 Ther eny Ram schal stonde / 1931

Ful many mayde bright' in bour
 þay mourne for him *paramour*
 whan hem were bet' to slepe 1934
 But' he was chast' and no lecchour
 And sweet' as is þe brembre flour
 That' bereþ þe reede heepe / 1937

And so it fel vpon a day
 For soþ as I ȝow telle may /
 Sir Thopas wold out' ryde 1940
 he worth vpon his steede gray
 And in his hond a launcegay
 A long' sword by his syde 1943

he priketh þurgh a fair forest/
 Ther In is many a wilde best/
 ȝe boþe buk / and hare 1946
 And as he prikeþ north and Est'
 I tel it ȝow hym had almest'
 Bityd a sory care 1949

Ther springen herbes greet' and smale
 The licorys and þe Cetewale /
 And many a clow gilofre 1952
 And notemuge to put' in ale
 whepir it be moist or stale
 Or for to lay in cofre 1955

The briddes synge it is no nay
 The sperhauk^t and þe popiniay
 That^t ioye it was to heere 1958
 The þrostilcok^t maad eek^t his lay
 The woode dowue vpon þe spray
 So song^t ful lowde and cleere 1961

Sir Thopas fel in loue-longing^t
 whan that^t he herde þe briddes synge [*leaf 204, back*]
 And priked as he were wood 1964
 His faire steede in his prikyng
 So swette þat^t men might^t him wryng
 His sydes were al blood 1967

Sir Thopas eek^t so wery was
 For priking^t on þe softe gras
 So feers was his corrage 1970
 That^t down he layd him in þe place
 To make his steede som solace
 And 3af^t him good forage 1973

O seinte Mary benedicite
 what^t eylith þis loue at^t me
 To bynde me so sore 1976
 My dremed al this night^t par de
 An elf^t queen schal my lemman be
 And slepe vnder my gore 1979

An Elf^t queen wol I haue I-wis
 For in this world no womman is
 worthy to be my make 1982
 In toun [*as part of l. 1982*]
 Alle opir wommen I forsake
 And to an Elf^t queen I me take
 By dale and eek^t by doune 1986

In to his sadil he clomb anoon
 And priked ouer stile and stoon
 An elf^t queen for to spye 1989
 Til he so longe haþ ryden and goon
 That^t he fond in a priue woon
 The contre of^t fairye 1992
 ¶ So wylde [as part of l. 1992]
 For in þat^t contre was þer noon :
 [. *no gap in the MS.*]
 Neither wif^t ne childe [as part of l. 1994] 1996

Til þat þer cam a greet geaunt/
 his name was sir Olifaunt^t
 A perilous man of^t dede 1999
 he swar child by Termagaunt^t
 For if^t þou prike out of^t myn haunt^t
 Anoon I slee þe 2002
 with my mace [as part of l. 2002]
 heer is þe queen of^t fayerie
 with harp. and lute and Symphonye
 dwellynge in þis place [as part of l. 2005] 2006

The child sayd also mote I the [leaf 205]
 To morwe wil I meete with þe
 whan I haue myn armure 2009
 And ȝit I hope par ma fay
 That^t þou schalt^t with þis launcegay
 Abyen it ful soure 2012
 ¶ þy mawe [as part of l. 2012]
 Schal I persyn if^t þat^t I may
 Er it be fully prime of^t day
 For heer schalt^t þou be slawe 2016

- Sir thopas drough on bak^t ful fast^t
 This geaunt^t at^t him stoon^es cast /
 Out^t of a fell staf^t slynge 2019
 But^t faire eschape^p child thopas
 And al it^t was þurgh^h goddis gras
 And þurgh^h his berynge / 2022
- 3et^t lesteneth lordynges to my tale /
 Merier þan þe nightyngale /
 I wol 3ow roun^e 2025
 how *sir* thopas wiþ sides smale /
 Prikyng^e ouer hul and dale
 Is come ageyn to toune 2028
- his mery men comaunded he
 To make him boþe game and gle
 For needes most^t he fight^t 2031
 with a geaunt^t with heedes þre
 For *paramours* and iolite
 Of oon þat schon ful bright 2034
- Do come he sayde my mynstrales
 And gestours for to telle tales
 Anoon in myn armyng^e 2037
 Of Romaunces þat ben reales
 Of popes and of Cardinales
 And eek^t of loue likyng^e 2040
- Thay fet^t him first^t þe swete wyn
 And made him eek^t in a maselyn
 A real spicerye 2043
 Of gyngebred þat^t was so fyn
 And licorys and eek^t comyn
 with sugre þat is trye / 2046

He dede next^t his white leere
 Of^t cloth of^t lake whyt^t and cleere

A brech and eek^t a schert^t 2049
 And next^t his schert^t an aketoun
 And ouer þat^t an haberioun
 For þe^rsyng^t of^t his hert^t 2052

And ouer þat^t a fyn hauberke^t
 was al I-wrought^t of^t Iewes werk^t
 Ful strong^t it^t was of^t plate 2055
 And ouer þat^t his cote-armour
 As whyt^t as is a lily flour
 In which he wold debate 2058

his scheld was al of^t gold so red
 And þe^r Inne was a bores heed
 A charboele by his syde / 2061
 And ther he swor on ale and bred
 How þat^t þe geaunt^t schal be deed
 Bytyde what^t bytyde / 2064

His iambeux were of^t quirboily
 His swerdes schethe of^t yuory
 His helm of^t latoun bright^t 2067
 His sadel was of^t rowel boon
 His bridel as þe sonne schon
 Or as þe moone light^t 2070

his spere was of^t Cipres
 That^t bodeth werre and no þing^t pees
 The heed ful scharp I-grounde / 2073
 His steede was al dappul gray
 Hit goth an ambel in þe way /
 Ful softely and rounde 2076

¶ In londe [In line 2076]
 lo lordes heer is a fyt'
 If 3e wil eny more of it'
 To telle it' wol I fonde 2080

[No break in the MS.]

[The Second Fit.]

N Ow hold 3our mouth for charite
 Boþe knight' and lady fre
 And herkneþ to my spelle 2083
 Of batail and of chivalry
 And of ladys loue drewery [leaf 206]
 Anoon I wol 3ow telle / 2086

Men speken of Romauns of pris
 Of horn child and of ypotis
 Of Beuys and sir Gy 2089
 Of sir libeaux and pleyn damour
 But sir thopas bereþ þe flour
 Of real Chivalry 2092

His goode steede he bistrood
 And forth vpon his way he glood
 As spark' out' of þe bronde 2095
 Vpon his crest' he bar a tour
 And þer In stiked a lily flour
 God schilde his corps fro schonde 2098

And for he was a kny3t' auntrous
 He nolde slepen in noon hous
 But liggen in his hood 2101
 his brighte helm was his wonger
 And by him baytith his destrer
 Of herbes fyne and goode/ 2104

Himself^t drank^t water of^t þe welle

As dede þe knight^t of^t pertinelle /

So worthy vnder wede

2107

[. no gap in the MS.]

NO mor of þis for goddes dignite
 Quod our hoste / for þou makest me
 So wery of þy verrey lewednesse
 That al so wisly god my soule blesse / 2112
 Myn eeres aken for þy drasty speche
 Now such a rym þe deuel I byteche
 This may wel be rym dogerel quop he
 why so quod I why wilt þou lette me 2116
 More of my tale þan anoþer man
 Syn þat it is þe beste rym þat I can
 By god quod he for plainly at o word
 þy drasty rymyng is not worth a tord 2120
 þou dost nought elles but despendist tyme
 Sir at o word þou schalt no lenger ryme
 let se wher þou canst tellen ought in gest
 Or telle in prose som what atte lest [leaf 206, back] 2124
 In which þer be so merthe or doctrine
 Gladly quod I by goddes swete pyne /
 I wol 3ow telle a litel þing in prose
 That oughte like 3ow as I suppose / 2128
 Or elles certes 3e be to daungerous
 It is a moral tale vertuous
 Al be it told som tyme in sondry wise
 Of sondry folk as I schal 3ow deuyse / 2132
 As thus . 3e woot þat euery euaungelist
 þat telleþ vs þe peyne of Ihū crist
 Ne saith alle þing as his felawes dop
 But napeles here sentence is al soþ 2136
 And alle accorden as in here sentence
 Al be þer in her tellyng difference /

For some of hem sayn more and some lesse /
 whan þay his pitous passioun expresse / 2140
 I mene of mark^t mathew luk^t and Iohⁿ
 But^t douteles her sentence is al oon
 Therfor lordynges alle I ȝow biseche
 If^t ȝow þink^t þat^t I varye as in my speche 2144
 As þus þough þat^t I telle som what^t more
 Of prouerbes þan I haue herd bifore
 Comprehended in þis litel tretys here /
 To enforcen with þeffect^t of^t my matiere 2148
 And þough I not^t þe same wordes say
 As ȝe haue herd / ȝit^t to ȝow alle I pray
 Blameþ me nought for in my sentence
 Schul ȝe no wher fynde difference 2152
 Fro þe sentence of^t þis tretys lite
 After þe which þis litil tale I wryte
 And þerfor herkenep^t what^t I schal say
 And let^t me tellen al my tale I pray 2156

[*Break of 5 lines in the MS.*]

[There are no line-numbers or paragraph-breaks in the MS. Tyrwhitt's breaks are kept here, as they were in the Six-Text, to prevent slight differences in the Texts throwing out many lines.]

[leaf 207]

[2157] **A** 3ong^t man called Melibeus mighty and riche bygat vpon his wif^t þat^t called was prudens. a doughter^t which þat^t called was Sophie //
 [2158] Vpon a day byfel þat^t for his desport^t he is went^t in to þe feldes him to / play. [2159] his wif^t and his douȝter eek^t haþ he laft^t in-with his hous of which þe dores were fast^t I-schitte. [2160] þre of his olde foos han it^t espyed. and setten laddres to þe walles of his hous and by þe wyndowes ben entred [2161] and beetyn his wyf^t and woundid his douȝter wiþ fyue mortal woundes in fyue sondry places [2162] þat^t is to sayn in here feet^t in here hondes in here eeres in here nose and in here mouth and lafte her for deed and went^t away

[2163] ¶ whan Melibeus retourned was in to his hous and seigh al þis meschief^t he lik^t a man mad rendyng^t his cloþes gan wepe and crie.

[2164] Prudens his wyf^t as ferforth as sche dorste bisouȝt^t him of his wepyng^t to stynte / [2165] But not^t for þi he gan to crie euer lenger þe more

[2166] ¶ this noble wyf^t prudence remembred hire vpon þe sentens of Ovide in his boók^t that^t cleped is þe remedy of loue / wher as he seiþ [2167] ¶ he is a fool þat^t destourbeþ þe moder to wepe in þe deth of hir childe til sche haue I-wept^t hir fille as for a certeyn tyme [2168] and þan schal man doon his diligence as with anyable wordes hire to recomforte and praye hire of

hire wepyng^t to stinte [2169] ¶ For which resoun pis noble wif^t prudens suffred hir housbonde for to wepe and *crie* / as for a certeyn space. [2170] and whan sche seigh hir tyme^t sche sayd him in pis wise ¶ Allas my lord quod sche why make 3e 3oure self^t for to be lik^t a fool. [2171] For soþe it apperteyneth not^t to a wys man to make such sorwe. [2172] 3oure dou3ter wif þe grace of god schal warischte^t be and eschape. [2173] and al were it so þat sche right now were deed^t 3e ne oughte nou3t^t as for hir deþ 3oure silf^t destroye [2174] ¶ Senec saip. þe wise man schal not^t take to gret^t discomfort for þe deth of his children^t [2175] but certes he schulde suffren it in pacience as wel as he abydeþ þe deþ of his owne persone

[2176] ¶ This melibeus answerde anon & sayde ¶ what^t man quod he schuld of his wepynge stynte þat^t hap a cause for to wepe [2177] ¶ Ihū *cris*^t ¶ Qualiter ihu christus fleuit propter mortem lazari
oure lord himself^t wepte for þe deth of lazarus his frend [2178] ¶ Prudens answerde Certes wel I wot/ attemperel wepyng^t is no þing^t defended to him þat sorwful is. amonges folk^t in sorwe. But^t it is raper graunted him to wepe / [2179] þe apostel poule vnto þe *Apostolus ad romanos*
Romayns writeþ. A man schal reioyce with hem þat^t maken ioye / And wepe with such folk^t as wepen [2180] ¶ But þough attemperel ¹wepyng^t be graunted^t Outrageous [*leaf 207, back*]
wepynge certes is defended // [2181] Measure of wepynge be conserued. after þe lore of *cris*^t þat techeth vs senec [2182] ¶ whan þat^t þi frend is deed quod he^t let^t nought þin yen to moyste ben of teres ne to moche drye ¶ Al þough the teeres come out^t of þine eyzen^t let^t he not^t falle [2183] ¶ And whan þou hast^t forgon þy frend^t do diligence to gete anoper frende ¶ And þis is more wisdom þan to wepe for þy frend which þat þou hast lorn. For þer in is no boote [2184] ¶ And þerfore if^t 3e gouerne 3ow by sapience put away sorwe out^t of 3oure hert [2185] ¶ Remembreth 3ow þat^t Ihc^t Sirac saip

¶ A man þat is ioyous and glad in herte: it him conserveth florischinge in his age ¶ But soply sorweful herte makeþ his boones drye [2186] ¶ he saiþ eek þus. þat sorwe in herte sleþ ful many a man [2187] ¶ Salamon saiþ þat right as motthes in schepes flees annoyeth þe clothes. and þe smale wormes to þe tre: Right / so annoyeth sorwe to þe herte [2188] ¶ wherfore vs oughte as wel in þe deþ of oure children as in þe losse of oure goodes temporales haue pacience

[2189] ¶ Remembreth 3ow vpon þe pacien Iop ¶ whan he hadde lost his children and his temporal substance and in his body endured and receyued ful many a greuous tribulacioun: 3it sayde he þus [2190] ¶ Oure lord it/ sent/ vnto me Oure lord it hap raft fro me. Right so as oure lord wil: riȝt so be it doon ¶ I-blessed be þe name of oure lord [2191] To þese forsayde þinges answerith Melibeus vnto his wif Prudens Alle þine wordes ben soþ quod he and þerto profytable ¶ But soply myn herte is so troubled wiþ þis sorwe: þat I noot/ what to doone [2192] ¶ Let calle quod prudence þy trewe frendes alle and þy linage whiche þat ben trewe & wise. telleth hem 3oure greuaunce and herken what þay say in counseilynge. and 3ow gouerne after here sentence. [2193] ¶ Salomon saith ¶ werke al þi þing by counseil and þe þar neuer rewe

[2194] ¶ þan by þe counseil of his wyf prudens this melibeus let calle a gret congregacioun of peple [2195] as Surgiens. phisiciens olde and 3onge and some of his olde enemyes recounsiled as by her semblaunt to his loue and to his grace. [2196] and þer wiþ al þer come some of his neigheours þat deden him reuerence more for drede þan for loue as happed ofte [2197] ¶ Ther comen also ful many subtil flaterers and wise aduoketes lerned in þe lawe

[2198] ¶ And whan þese folk togidere assemblid were: This melibeus in sorwful wyse schewed hem his caas.

[2199] and by þe maner of his speche: it semed þat in ¹herte he bar a cruel Ire redy to do vengeance vpon his foos. and sodeynly desirede þat þe werre schulde bygyne. [2200] but^t natheles 3it^t axed he her counseil in þis matier. [2201] ¶ A Sirurgien by licens and assent of suche as were wyse vp ros and to melibeus sayde as 3e may hie

[2202] ¶ Sire quod he as to vs Sirurgiens appertieneth þat we do to euery wight þe beste þat we can wher as we ben withholde and to oure pacient þat we do no damage [2203] ¶ wherfore it happeþ many tyme and ofte þat whan tweye han euerich wounded oþer: oo. same surgien heleþ hem boþe. [2204] where vnto oure art it is not perteyned to norische werre ne parties to supporte: [2205] but certes as to warisching^t of 3oure dou3ter al be it so þat sche perilously be woundid: we schullen do so tentyf^t besynes fro day to night þat with þe grace of god sche schal be hool and sound als soone as it is possible [2206] ¶ Almost^t right^t in þe same wise þe phisiciens answerden: saue þat þay sayden a fewe wordes more [2207] ¶ That ryght^t as maladies ben cured by her contraries: Right^t so schal men warissch werre by vengeance [2208] ¶ His neyhe-boures ful of enuye his feyned freendes þat semede recounsiled his flatereres [2209] maden semblaunt of wepyng^t and appaired and aggregated moche of þis matiere in preisyng^t gretly melibe of might. of power of Riches. and of frendes despisinge þe power of his aduersaries [2210] and sayden outerly þat he anon schulde wreke him on his aduersaries be bygynnyng^t of werre

[2211] vp roos þanne an aduocate þat was wys. by leue and by counseil of oþere þat were wise and sayde / [2212] ¶ Lordynges. þe needes for whiche we ben assemblit in þis place is ful heuy þing^t and an heigh matier [2213] by cause of þe wrong^t & of þe wikkednes þat haþ ben doon and eek^t of þe grete damages þat

in tyme comyng^t ben possible to falle for þe same [2214] and eek^t by cause of^t þe grete richesse and power of^t þe partes bothe [2215] for þe whiche resouns it were a ful gret peril to erren in these materes [2216] ¶ wherfore melibeus þis is oure sentence ¶ we counseile ȝow abouen alle þinges þat^t riȝt anoon þou do diligence in kepyng^t of^t þy body in such a wyse þat þou ne wante noon espye ne wacche þy body for to saue [2217] ¶ And after þat^t we counseile þat in þin hous þou sette sufficaunt garnisoun So þat^t þay may as wel þy body as þin hous defende [2218] ¶ But certes for to moue werre ne sodeynly for to do vengeance[!] we may not deme in so litel tyme þat^t it were profitable [2219] ¶ wherfore we axen leysir ¹and a space [. . . .] in þis caas to demen [2220] ¶ For þe comune prouerbe saiþ þis ¶ he þat^t soone demeth soone schal repente [2221] ¶ And eek^t men sayn þat þilke Iuge is wys þat soone vnderstondeþ a matier and Iuggeþ by leysir. [2222] ¶ For al be it so þat / alle tarynge is anoyful[!] algates it is no reproef^t in ȝeuyng^e of^t Iuggement. ne of^t ve[n]gaunce takyng^t whan it is suffisaunt and resonable [2223] and þat schewed oure lord ihū crīst by example ¶ For whan þat þe womman þat was I-take in aduoutrie was brouȝt in his presence to knowen what schulde be doon of^t hir persone Al be it þat he wist him self^t what^t þat^t he wolde answe^r! ȝit wolde he not answe^r sodeynly. but^t he wolde haue deliberacioun and in þe ground hem wrot twyes. [2224] and by þese causes we axe deliberacioun. and we schul þanne by þe grace of^t god counseile þe þing^t þat^t schal be profytable

[2225] ¶ Vpstarten þenne þe ȝonge folkes anoon at oones[!] and þe moste part^t of^t þat^t companye han skorned þese olde wise men and bygonne to make noyse and sayden [2226] ¶ Right so as whil þat/ Iren is hoot men scholden smyte[!] Right^t so schulde men wreke here wronges whil

þat þay ben freische and newe ¶ And with lowde vois þay cryde . werre . werre .

[2227] ¶ Vproos þo oon of þese olde wise and with his hond made countenaunce þat men schulde holde hem stille and ȝiuen him audience [2228] ¶ lordyngs quod he ther is ful many a man þat crieth werre werre wot ful litel what werre amounteth . [2229] werre at his byggyng^g haþ so greet and entre and so large þat euery wight may entre whan him likeþ and lightly fynde werre [2230] ¶ But certes what ende schal falle þerof^t it is not lightly to knowe [2231] For soply whan þat werre is oones bygonne^t þer is ful many a child vnbores of his mooder þat schal sterue ȝong^t by cause of þilke werre or elles lyue in sorwe and deye in wrecchidnes [2232] ¶ & þerfore er þat eny werre be bygonne . men moste haue gret counseil and gret deliberacioun . [2233] ¶ And whan þis olde man wende to enforce his tale by resouns wel neigh alle at oones bygonne þay to rise for to breke his tale and beden him fulofte his wordes to abrigge . [2234] For soply he þat precheþ to hem that liste not to heere his wordes his sermoun hem anoyeth [2235] ¶ For Ihesus Sirac saith þat wepyng^t in musik^t is a noyous þing^t . þis is to say ¶ As moche auayleþ to speke tofore folk/ to whiche his speche annoyeth^t as it is to synge byfore hem whiche þat wepith [2236] ¹¶ And whan þis wise man saugh him wanted audience^t al schamefast he sette him doun agayn [2237] ¶ For Salamon saith . ther as þou may haue noon audience^t enforce þe not to speke [2238] ¶ I se wel quod þis wise man þat þe comune prouerbe is sop ¶ That good counseil wantith whan it is most neede

[2239] ¶ Ȝit hadde þis melibeus in his counseil many folk þat priuely in his eere han counseled him certain þinges and counseled him þe contrarie in general audience

[2240] ¶ whan melibeus hadde herd ȝet þe grettest

party of^t his counseil were accorded þat^t he schulde make werre. Anoon he consented to here counseilyng^t and fully affermed here sentence [2241] ¶ Thanne dame Prudence whan þat^t sche saugh þat^t hir housbonde schop him to wreke him of^t his enemyes and to gynne werre: / Sche in ful humble wise whan sche saugh hire tyme sayde him þese wordes [2242] ¶ My lord quod sche I ȝow biseche as hertily as I dar and kan ne haste ȝow nought to faste and for alle guerdouns as ȝeue me audience [2243] ¶ For Peres Alfons saith ¶ who þat^t doþ to þe ouþer good or harm: haste þe nought^t to quyten him. For in þis wise þy freend wil abyde: and þin enemy schal þe lenger lyue in drede [2244] ¶ The prouerbe saiþ ¶ he hastith wel þat^t wisly can abyde and in wikked haste is no profyt^t

[2245] ¶ This melibeus answerde vn to his wyf^t prudens ¶ I purpose not^t quod he to werke by þy counseil for many causes and resouns ¶ For certes euery wight^t wolde holde me þanne a fool [2246] ¶ þis is to sayn ¶ If I for þy counseil wolde chaunge þinges þat^t affermed ben by so many wise: [2247] I say þat alle wommen be wikked and noon good of^t hem alle ¶ For of^t a þousand men saiþ Salomon I fond oon good man: But certes of^t alle wommen good womman fond I neuer noon [2248] ¶ And also certes if I gouernede me by þy counseil it schulde seme that I hadde ȝiuen to þe ouer me þe maistry and god forbeede er it so were [2249] ¶ For Ihe Syrac saiþ þat^t if a wif^t haue maistrie sche is contrarious to hir housbond [2250] ¶ and Salomon saith ¶ Neuer in þy lif^t to þy wyf^t ne to þy child ne to þy freend ne ȝeue no power ouer þiself ¶ For better it were þat^t þy children axen of^t þy persone þinges þat been needful to hem þan þou se þiself^t in þe hondes of^t þy children [2251] ¶ And also if I wolde werke by þy counselynge certes it most som tyme be secre til it were tyme þat it moste be

knowe and þis ne may not^t be [2252] [.
.
. [2253]
.
.
. *no gap in the MS.*]

[2254] whan dame Prudence ful debonerly and
with gret pacience hadde herd al þat hir housbonde
liked for to seye ¶ Than axed sche of him licence ¹for to
speke and sayde in þis wise [2255] ¶ My lord quod sche
as to þoure firste resoun certes it may lightly be
answered. For I say it is no foly to chaunge
counsel whan þe þing/ is chaungid. For elles whan
þe þing^t semeþ oþerwise þan it was biforn
[2256] And moreouer I say þough þat^t ȝe han
sworn and I-hight to parforme þoure emprise And
napeles ȝe wayue to parforme þilke same emprise
by iuste cause men schulde not say þerfore þat/ ȝe were
a lyere ne forsworn [2257] For þe book/ seiþ þat^t þe
wise man makeþ no lesyng^t whan he torneth his corrage to
þe better [2258] ¶ And al be it so þat þoure emprise be
establid and ordeyned by gret multitude of poeple: ȝit
thar ȝe not accomplise þilke same ordinaunce but ȝou like /
[2259] For þe troupe of þing^t and þe profyt^t ben
rather founde in fewe folk^t þat^t ben wise and ful of
resoun þan by gret multitude of folk^t þat^t euery man
crieth and clatereþ what^t þat him likeþ soþely
such multitude is not^t honest^t [2260] ¶ An to þe secounde
resoun wher as ȝe sayn þat alle wommen ben wikke:
Saue þoure grace. Certis ȝe despise alle wommen in þis
wise and þat alle despysith seiþ þe book /
[2261] And senec saith who-so wil haue Sapi-
ence schal no man despraye but^t he schal gladly teche þe
science þat^t he can wipoute presumpcioun of pryde
[2262] and suche þinges as he nought^t can he
schal not^t ben aschamed to lerne hem and enquere of lasse

folk^t þan himself^t [2263] ¶ And sire þer haþ
 be ful many a good womman [.
 [2264]] if alle
 wommen hadde ben wikke [2265] after þat for
 þe grete bounte þat^t is in wommen: Oure lord ihu crist/
 whan he was risen fro deþ to lyue apperede raþer to a
 womman þan to his apostles. [2266] ¶ And þough
 þat^t Salamon say he fond neuer good womman
 It^t folwith nouȝt^t þerfore þat^t alle wommen ben
 wikke. [2267] For þough þat he fonde noone goode
 wommen certes many a noþer man haþ founden
 many a womman ful goode and trewe [2268] ¶ Or elles
 paraenture þentent of^t Salamon was þis as in
 souereyn bounte. he fond no womman [2269] þis is to
 say þat^t þer is no wight^t þat haþ souerein bounte
 saue god aloone as he himself^t recorderþ in his euau-
 gelie. [2270] For þer nys no creature so good þat^t him
 wantith som-what of^t þe perfeccioun of^t god þat is his
 makere [2271] ¶ Ȝoure þridde resoun is þis. ȝe seyn. þat^t if^t
 ȝe gouerned ȝow by counsel of^t me it schulde seme þat ȝe
 hadde yeue me the maystry and þe lordschipe ouer ȝoure
 persone. [2272] sire saue ȝoure grace it^t is not^t so. For
 if^t so were þat no man schulde be counseiled but by
 hem þat hadde maystrye and lordschipe of^t his persone:
 men wolde nought^t be counseiled so ofte [2273] ¶ For soply
 þilke man þat^t axeth ¹counsel of^t a purpos. ȝet^t haþ he
 fre chois wheþer he wil werke by þat^t purpos or
 noon [2274] ¶ And so to ȝoure ferþe resoun þer ȝe
 sayn þat the ianglerie of^t wommen can hyde þinges þat^t
 þey wot^t not^t of^t as who saith þat^t a womman can nought^t
 hyde þat^t at^t sche woot^t: [2275] Sire þese wordes ben vnder-
 stonde of^t wommen þat^t ben iangelers and wikke.
 [2276] of^t whiche wommen men sayn þat^t þre þinges
 dryuen a man out of^t his oughne hous þat^t is to say. smoke.
 droppynge of^t reyn and wikked wyfes. [2277] of^t

suche wommen seiþ salomon þat it were better to a man to
 dwelle in desert þan with a womman þat is riotous [2278] and
 sire by 3oure leue þat am not I [2279] ¶ For 3e han ful
 ofte assayed my grete scilence and my grete pacience and
 eek how wel þat I can hyde and hele þinges þat
 ben secrely to hyde [2280] ¶ And sobly as to
 3oure fyfte resoun wher as 3e sayn þat in wikkede coun-
 seil wommen venquisscheth men. god wot þilke resoun
 stont here in no stede / [2281] For vnderstondith now 3e
 a3ein counseil to do wickidnes [2282] and if 3e wil
 wirke wickidnes and 3oure wyf restreyne þilke
 wicked purpos and ouercome 3ou by resoun and by
 good counseil: [2283] Certes 3oure wyf oweth raper be
 preised than y-blamed / [2284] ¶ Thus schulde 3e vnder-
 stonde þe philosopher þat seiþ in wicked counseil
 wommen venquyschen her housbondes [2285] ¶ And þer
 as 3e blame alle wymmen and here resouns: I schal schewe
 by many resouns and ensamples þat many a womman hath
 ben ful good and 3it been and here counseiles ful holsome
 and profitable [2286] ¶ Eke some men han sayd þat þe
 counseilyng of wommen is ouþer to dere or to
 litel of pris [2287] But al be it so þat ful many a
 womman is badde and hir counseil vile and not worþ:
 3et han men founde many a ful good womman and ful
 discret and wys in counseilyng [2288] ¶ lo Iacob by
 counseil of his moder Rebecca wan þe blessing of
 his fader ysaak and þe lordschipe of alle his breþeren
 [2289] ¶ Iudith by hire goode counseil delyuered þe Citee of
 Bethulie in which sche dwellid out of þe hous of
 Olophernus þat had it byseged and wolde it al destroye
 [2290] ¶ Abigayl deliuered Nabal hir housbond fro
 Dauid þe king þat wolde haue I-slayn him and appesed
 þe Ire of þe kyng by hir witte and by hir good counseil-
 ynge [2291] ¶ Hester by good counseil enhaunsed gretly
 þe poeple of god In þe regne of assuerus þe kyng
 [2292] and þe same bounte in good counseilyng of many

a good womman may men rede and telle [2293] And more ouer whan oure lord had creat adam oure forme fader: he sayde in þis wise [2294] ¶ Hit is not goode to be a man aloone. make we to him an help semblable to him self [2295] ¶ here may 3e se þat if þat a womman were not ¹good and hir counseil good and profytable: [2296] oure lord god of heuen wolde neither haue wrouȝt hem ne called hem help of man but rap^r confusioun to man [2297] ¶ And þer sayde oones a clerk in tuo versus ¶ what is better than gold. Iasper. And what is better þan Iasper: wisdom. [2298] and what is better than wisdom: womman. and what is better than good womman: No þing [2299] ¶ And sire by many oper resouns may 3e se þat many wommen ben goode and [. . . *no gap in MS.*] profitable [2300] and þerfore if 3e wil truste to my counseil: I schal restore 3ou 3oure douȝter hool and sound [2301] ¶ and eek I wil doon 3ou so moche þat 3e schul haue honour in þis cause

[2302] ¶ whan Melibe had herd þese wordes of his wif prudens: he seide þus. [2303] ¶ I se wel þat þe word of Salomon is soþ ¶ he seith þat þe wordes þat ben spoken discretly by ordinaunce been hony combes. For þay 3euen swetnes to þe soule. and holmes to þe body [2304] ¶ And wyf bycause of þy swete wordes and eek for I haue assayed and proued þi grete sapiens & þi grete troupe: I wil gouerne me by þy counseil in alle þinges

[2305] ¶ Now sire quod dame prudens and syn 3e vouchen sauf to be gouerned by my counseilyng: I wil enforme 3ou how 3e schul gouerne 3oure self in chesyng of 3oure counseil [2306] ¶ 3e schul first/ in alle 3oure werkes mekely biseche to þe hihe god þat he wol be 3our conseilour [2307] & schape 3ou to þat entent þat he ȝiue 3ou counseil and confort as taughte Toby his sone [2308] ¶ At alle tymes þou schalt blesse

god and pray him to dresse þy wayes. and loke þat alle þi counseiles be in him for euermore [2309] ¶ Seint Iame eek^t saith ¶ If eny of 3ow haue neede of sapiens axe it of god. [2310] and aftirward þanne schul 3e take counseil in 3oure self^t. and examine wel 3oure þou3tes of suche þinges as 3ou þinkip þat is best^t for 3oure profyt^t [2311] and þanne schul 3e dryue fro 3oure hertes þo þat ben contrarie to good counseil. [2312] þat is to say. Ire. coueytise. and hastynes

[2313] ¶ First^t he þat axep counseil of himself^t. certes he moste be wiþoute Ire. for many cause [2314] ¶ The first is þis ¶ He þat haþ gret^t Ire and wrappe in himself^t. he weneth alwey he may do þing^t þat he may not doo [2315] ¶ And secoundly he þat is Irous and wroþ. he may not wel deme [2316] ¶ and he þat may not wel deme^t may nought^t wel counseile [2317] ¶ The þridde is þis. þat he þa is Irous and wroth as saip Senec may not speke but blameful þinges [2318] and with his vicious wordes he stireþ oþer folk^t to anger and to Ire [2319] ¶ And eek^t sire 3e moste dryue coueitise out of 3oure herte / [2320] ¶ For þapostil saith þat coueytise is roote of alle harmes. [2321] And trusteth wel þat a coueitous man ne can not deme ne pinke¹ but oonly to fulfille þe ende of his coueitise [2322] ¶ And certes þat may neuer ben accomplished ¶ For euer þe more abundaunce þat he hath of riches. þe more he desireth [2323] And sire 3e moste also dryue out of 3our herte hastynes. [2324] For certes 3e may nought deme for þe beste a sodein þou3t^t þat falleþ in 3oure herte ¶ But 3e moste auyse 3ou on it ful ofte [2325] ¶ For as 3e herde here biforn þe comune prouerbe is þis^t þat he þat soone demeth soone repentith^t

[2326] ¶ Sire 3e ben not alway in lik^t disposicioun [2327] For certis som þing^t þat som tyme semeþ to 3ow þat it is good for to doo^t anoþer tyme it semeþ to 3ou þe contrarie

[2328] whan 3e han taken counseil in 3oure seluen. and han demed by good deliberacioun such ping^t as 3ow semeþ best^t [2329] ¶ þanne rede I 3ou þat 3e kepe it secre. [2330] Bywreye nought 3oure counseil to no persone but it so be þat 3e wene sicurly that þurgh 3oure bywreyinge 3oure cōndicioun schal be to 3ow þe more profytable [2331] ¶ For Ihe Syrac saiþ ¶ Neiþer to þi foo ne to þi freend discouere not^t þy secre ne þy foly [2332] ¶ For þey wil 3iue 3ou audience and lokyng^t and supportacioun in þi presence and scorn in thin absence [2333] ¶ anoþer clerk^t saiþ þat^t skarsly schalt^t þou fynde eny persone þat may kepe counseil secreely [2334] ¶ The book^t saith ¶ whil þou kepist^t þi counsail in þin herte þou kepest^t it in þi prisoun [2335] ¶ and whan þou bywreyst^t þi counseil to any wight^t he holdeþ þe in his snare [2336] ¶ And þerfore 3ow is better hyde 3oure counseil in 3oure herte þan prayen him to whom 3e haue bywryed 3oure counseil þat^t he wol kepe it clos and stille [2337] ¶ For Seneca seith ¶ If^t so be þat^t þou ne maist^t not þin owne counsel hyde^t how darst^t þou preuen any oþer wight^t þi counseil secreely to kepe^t [2338] ¶ But napeles if^t þou wene securly þat^t þy bywreying^t of^t þy counsel to a persone wol make þy condicioun stonde in þe better plite^t þanne schalt^t þou telle him þy counsel in þis wise [2339] ¶ First^t þou shalt^t make no semblaunt wher þe were leuer werre or pees. or þis or þat. ne schewe him not^t þi wille and þin entent^t. [2340] For truste wel þat comunly þese counseilours ben flaterers [2341] and namely þe counselours of grete lordes [2342] ¶ For þay enforcen hem alway raper to speke plesaunt wordes enclynyng^t to þe lordes lust þan wordes þat been trewe and profitable [2343] ¶ And þerfore men say þat þe riche man haþ selden good counseil. but if^t he haue it of^t him self^t [2344] ¶ And after þat^t þou schalt^t consider þy frendes and þine enemyes. [2345] And as touching^t þy frendes^t þou schalt^t con-

sidere which of hem beþ most faithful and most wise and eldest and most approuyd in counsaylinge [2346] ¶ And of hem schalt þou axe þy counsail as þe caas¹ requireth

[2347] ¶ I say þat first ȝe schul clepe to ȝour counseil ȝoure frendes that ben trewe [2348] ¶ For Salomon saip For right as þe hert of a man delitith in sauour þat is soote: Right so. þe conseil of trewe frendes ȝeueþ swetnes to þe soule [2349] ¶ he saith also ther may no þing be likened to þe trewe freend [2350] ¶ For certes gold ne siluer beþ nought so moche worþ as þe goode wil of a trewe freend. [2351] ¶ And eek he sayde þat a trewe frend is a strong defens who þat it fyndeþ certes he fyndeþ a gret tresour [2352] ¶ þanne schul ȝe eek considere if þat ȝoure trewe frendes ben discrete and wyse For þe book saith. axe þi conseil alwey of hem þat ben wyse. [2353] and by þis same resoun shul ȝe clepe to ȝoure conseil of ȝoure frendes þat ben of age suche as haue I-seye sightes and ben expert in many þinges and ben approuyd in counseylinges [2354] ¶ For þe book saith þat in olde men is þe sapience and in longe tyme þe prudence [2355] ¶ And tullius saip þat grete þinges ben not ay accompliced by strengþe ne by delyuernes of body: but by good conseil by auctorite of persones and by science. the whiche þre þinges ne been not feble by age: but certis þay enforsen and encresen day by day [2356] and thanne schul ȝe kepe þis for a general reule ¶ First schul ȝe clepe to ȝoure conseil a fewe of ȝoure frendes þat ben especial [2357] For Salomon saip ¶ Many frendes haue þou but among a þousand chese þe oon to be þy conseilour. [2358] For al be it so þat þou first ne telle þy conseil but to a fewe: þou mayst afterward telle it to mo folk if it be neede [2359] But loke alwey þat þy conseilours haue þilke þre condiciouns þat I haue sayd

bifore þat is to say þat þay ben trewe and olde and of wys experiens [2360] ¶ And werke nouȝt alwey in euery neede by oon counseilour alloone ¶ For som tyme byhoueþ it be counseiled by many [2361] ¶ For Salomon saith ¶ Saluacioun of þinges is wher as þere bep many counseilours.

[2362] Now siþ þat I haue told ȝow of which folk ȝe schul be counseled ¶ Now wil I telle ȝow which counsel ȝe ouȝt eschiewe. [2363] First ȝe schal espie þe counsel of fooles ¶ For Salomon seiþ take no counseil of a fool For he ne can not counseile but after his oughne lust and his affeccoun [2364] ¶ The book seiþ þat þe proprete of a fool is þis he troweþ lightly harm of euery wight & lightly troweþ alle bounte in himself [2365] ¶ Thow schalt eschiewe eek þe counsel of alle flaterers suche as enforcen hem rapere to prayse ȝoure persone by flaterie þan for to telle ȝow þe soþfastnesse of þinges

[2366] ¶ wherfore Tullius saith Amonges alle pestilences þat ¹ben in frendschipe þat is þe grettest flaterie. ¶ And þerfore is it more neede þat þou eschiewe and drede flaterers more þan eny oþer peple [2367] ¶ The book seiþ. þou schalt rapere drede and flee fro þe swete wordes of flaterers. þen fro þe egre wordes of þy frend þat seiþ þe þi soþes [2368] ¶ Salamon seiþ þat þe wordes of a flaterer is a snare to cacche in Innocentȝ [2369] ¶ He seiþ also. he þat spekeþ to his frend wordes of swetnesse and of plesaunce setteþ a nette byfore his feet to cacchen him [2370] and þerfore seiþ Tullius ¶ Encline not þin eeres to flaterers ne tak no confort of þe wordes of flaterers [2371] ¶ And Catoun seiþ Auyse the wel and eschiewe wordes of swetnes and of plesaunce [2372] and eek þou schalt eschiewe þe counselyng of þin olde enemyes þat ben recounsiled. [2373] þe book seiþ. that wight retorneth soone in to þe

grace of his olde enemyes [2374] ¶ And ysope saith. Ne truste not to hem wiþ which þou hast had som tyme werre or enmyte. ne telle not hem þy counseil [2375] And Seneca telleþ þe cause why it may not be saith he þat wher as a greet fuyr haþ longe tyme endured: þat þere ne leueþ som vapour of hete [2376] ¶ And þerfore saith Salomon ¶ In þin olde enemy truste þou neuere [2377] ¶ For sicurly þough þin enemy be reconsiled and make þe cheer of humilite and lowteþ to þe his heed: ne trist him neuer [2378] For certes he makip þilke feyned humilite more for his profyt þan for eny loue of þi persone by cause he demyth to haue victorie ouer þi persone ¶ By such feyned countynauunce the whiche victorie he might nouȝt haue by stryf and werre [2379] ¶ And Petir Alfons saip ¶ Make no felaschipe with þine olde enemyes. for if þou do hem bounte: þey wil peruerten it in to wikkednes [2380] & eek þou most eschiewe þe counseilynge of hem þat ben þy seruauutz and beren þe gret reuerence. For þar auenture þai say it more for drede þan for loue [2381] And þerfore saith a philosophre in þis wise ¶ Ther is no wight parfytly trewe to him þat he to sore dredeth [2382] ¶ And Tullius saith ¶ þer is no wight so gret of eny emperour þat onge may endure but if he haue more loue of þe peple than drede [2383] ¶ Thow also eschiewe þe counseil of folk þat ben dronkelewe For þay ne can no counsel hyde [2384] ¶ For Salomon saith ¶ Ther regneþ no priuete þer as is dronkenesse [2385] ¶ ȝe schul also haue in suspect þe counseil of such folk as counseileþ ȝou oon þing priuely and counseile ȝow þe contrarie openly [2386] ¶ For Cassiodorie saith it is a maner sleighte to hindre whan he schewip to doon oon þing openly and werkith priuely þe contrarie. [2387] ¶ þou schalt also eschiewe þe counseil of wikked folkes ¶ For þe book saith. ¶ The counselyng of wikked folk is alway ful

of^t fraude [2388] ¶ and David saith ¶ Blisful is þat man
þat^t hap^t not^t folwed þe counseilyng^t of^t wikked men or
schrewes [2389] ¶ Thow schalt also eschiewe þe counseilynge
of^t 3onge folkes for here counsel is nought/ rype

[2390] ¶ Now sire syn I haue schewed 3ou of^t what^t folk^t
3e schul take 3oure counsail and of^t whiche folk^t 3e schullen
folwe þe counsel [2391] ¶ Now schal I teche 3ow how 3e
schul examyne 3oure counsel after þe doctrine of^t tullius
[2392] ¶ In the examynynge of 3oure conseiloures
3e schul considre many þinges [2393] ¶ Al-thir first^t 3e
schul considre þat in þilke þing^t that þou proposit^t
and vp what^t þing^t þou wilt^t haue counsel that verray
trouthe be sayd and considerid. þis is to sayn. telle
trewely þy tale [2394] ¶ For he þat^t saith fals may not^t
wel be counseled in þat cas of^t which he lyeth [2395]
¶ And after þis þou schalt considere the þinges þat^t
accorden to þat^t purpos. for to do by þy counsel
if^t resoun accorde þer to [2396] ¶ and eek^t if^t þy
might^t may accorde þer to. and if^t þe more part and þe
better part of^t þy conseilours accorde þer-to or noon
[2397] ¶ Thanne schalt^t þou considere what^t þing^t schal
folwe of^t þat^t counsailynge. as hate. pees. werre.
grace. profyt/. or damage and many oþer þinges
[2398] ¶ And in alle þese þinges þou schalt^t chese
þe beste and weyue alle oþer þinges [2399] þanne
schalt^t þou considre of^t what roote engendred is þy matier
of^t þy counsel and what fruyt^t may conserue and
engendre / [2400] ¶ Thow schalt also consider alle þese
causes from whens þai ben sprongen. / [2401] And
whan 3e haue examined 3oure counsel as I haue said
and which party is þe better and more profitable and
han approued by many wise folkes and olde: [2402]
Than schalt^t thow considre if^t þou maist^t performe it and
make of^t it a good ende [2403] ¶ For resoun wol nought^t
þat^t any man schuld bygynne a thing^t: but^t if^t he mighte
parforme it and make þer-of^t a good ende. [2404] ne no wight^t

schulde take vpon him so heuy a charge þat he mighte not
 bere it [2405] ¶ For þe prouerbe seiþ ¶ He þat moche
 embrasith destroyeþ litel [2406] ¶ And Catoun seiþ
 Assay to do such þing^t as þou hast^t power to doon.
 lest^t þat þy charge oppresse þe so sore. þat^t þe
 bihoue to wayue þing þat^t þou hast^t bygonne
 [2407] ¶ And if so be þat^t þou be in doubte¹ wher þou
 maist^t parforme a þing^t or noon chese rather to suffre
 þan bygynne [2408] ¶ And petre alfons saith If
 þou hast might to doon a þing^t of which þou most^t
 repente it is better nay þan 3ee / [2409] þis is
 to sayn þat þe is better holde þy tongue stille þan
 to speke [2410] ¶ Than may 3e vnderstonde by
 strengre resouns. þat^t if þou hast power to parforme a
 werk^t of which þou schalt^t repente: þanne is it better
 þat^t þou suffre þan bigynne. [2411] wel seyn þay þat^t
 defenden euery wight^t to assaie þing^t of which he is
 in doute whepir he may parforme it or noon [2412]
 ¶ And after whan 3e han examyned 3oure counseil as I
 haue sayd biforn and knowen wel 3e may par-
 forme 3oure emprise: conferme it þanne sadly til it be at
 an ende

[2413] ¶ Now is it tyme and resoun þat I schewe 3ow
 whanne and wherfore þat 3e may chaunge 3oure coun-
 seil wiþouten reproef^t / [2414] ¶ Sothly a man
 may chaunge his purpos and his counseil if þe cause
 cesseþ or whan a newe cause bytydeþ [2415] ¶ For þe
 lawe seith ¶ vpon þinges þat newly bitydeþ bihoueþ
 newe counseil. [2416] and Seneca seith ¶ If þy counseil
 be comen to þe eeres of þin enemy: chaunge þy counsail
 [2417] ¶ Thow maist/ also chaunge þy counseil if so be
 þat^t þou fynde þat^t by errour or by oþer
 processe harm or damage may bytyde [2418] ¶ Also
 þou chaunge þy counseil if þay be dishonest^t or elles
 comuneth of dishoneste. [2419] For þe lawes sayn ¶ That
 alle þe hestes þat^t ben dishoneste ben of no valieu

[2420] and eek^t if^t it so be þat^t it be impossible. or may not^t goodly be *par*formed or kept^t

[2421] and take þis for a general reule ¶ That^t euery counseil þat^t is affermed or strengþed so strongly þat^t it may not be chaunged for no condicioun þat^t may bitide ¶ I say þat þilke counseil is wikked

[2422] ¶ þis melibeus whan he had herd þe doctrine of^t his wyf^t dame prudens answerde in þis wise [2423] ¶ Dame quod he ȝit as in to þis tyme ȝe han wel and couenably taught^t me as in general how I schal gouerne me in chesyng and in wiþholdyng of^t my conseiloures [2424] ¶ But^t now wold I fayn ȝe wolde condescende as in especial [2425] & telleþ me what^t semeþ or how likeþ ȝow by oure conseiloures þat^t we han chosen in oure present neede

[2426] ¶ My lord quod sche I byseke ȝow in al humblesce þat^t ȝe wil not^t wilfully reþplye aȝeinst^t my resouns ne distempe ȝoure herte þough I say or speke þing^t þat^t ȝow displeith [2427] ¶ For god woot^t þat^t as in myn entent^t I speke it for ȝoure beste. for ȝoure honour. and for ȝour^t ¹profyt^t eek [2428] ¶ And sobly I hope þat ȝour benignite wol take it in to pacience [2429] ¶ For trusteþ me wel quod sche þat^t ȝoure counseil as in þis caas ne schulde not as for to speke *propurly* be called a counseilyng^t! but / a mocion or a moeuyng of^t foly [2430] in which counseil ȝe han erred in many a sondry wise

[2431] ¶ First and forward ȝe han erred in þe gaderyng^t of^t ȝoure conseilours [2432] For ȝe schulde first^t han cleped a fewe folkes [.
 *no gap in the MS.*] if^t it hadde be neede [2433] ¶ But^t certes ȝe han sodeinly cleped to ȝour counseil a gret^t multitude of poeple ful cha[r]geous and ful anoyous for to hierre [2434] ¶ Also ȝe han erred for þer as ȝe schulde oonly haue clepid to ȝoure counseil ȝoure trewe frendes olde and wise! [2435] ȝe haue I-cleped straunge folk^t ȝonge folk^t. false flatereres and enemyes

reconsiled and folk^t þat^t doon 3ow reuerence wipoute
loue [2436] ¶ Eke also 3e han erred! For 3e han
brouȝt^t with 3ow to 3oure counseil. Ire. Coueitise and
Hastynes. [2437] þe whiche þre þinges ben contra-
rious to euery counsail honest^t and profitable [2438] ¶ The
whiche þre þinges 3e haue nought^t annentissched or destroyed
neyþer in 3oure self^t ne in 3oure conseiloures as 3e oughte
[2439] ¶ Also 3e haue erred. For 3e haue schewed to 3oure
conseilours 3oure talent and 3oure affeccioun to make
werre and for to doon vengeance anon [2440] ¶ þay han
espyed by 3oure wordes to what þinge 3e ben enclined
[2441] and þefore haue þay counseiled 3ow rather to
3oure talent þan to 3oure profyt [2442] ¶ 3e haue erred
also! For it semep þat^t 3ow sufficeþ to haue been coun-
seiled by þese conseilours only and wip litel ays
[2443] wher-as in so gret^t and so heigh a neede it hadde
be necessarious mo conseilours and more deliberacioun to
parforme 3oure emprise [2444] 3e haue erred also ¶ For
[.] [2445] . .
. *no gap*] 3e haue maked no diuisioun bytwixe
3oure counsailours þis is to seyn bitwix 3oure
frendes and 3oure feyned conseilours. [2446] ne 3e ne haue
nought I-knowe þe wille of 3oure frendes olde and wise.
[2447] But 3e haue cast alle here wordes in an hochepoche /
and enclyned 3oure herte to þe more part and to þe
gretter nombre and þere be 3e condescendid [2448]
¶ And syn 3e wot wel men schal alway fynde a
gretter nombre of fooles þan of wyse men! [2449] and
þefore þe counsailes þat ben at congregaciouns and mul-
titudes of folk^t. þer as men taken more reward to þe
¹nombre þan to þe sapience of persones. [2450] 3e se wel
þat^t in suche counseilynges fooles haue maystrie [2451]
¶ Melibeus answerde agayn and sayde ¶ I graunte wel þat^t
I haue erred! [2452] But þere as þou hast^t told me
toforþ þat^t he is nought^t to blame þat^t chaungeþ his coun-

seilours in certeyn caas and for certeyn iuste causes [2453] ¶ I am al redy to chaunge my counseilours right as þou wilt deuyse [2454] ¶ The prouerbe saith þat for to do synne is mannysch. But/ certes for to perseuere longe in synne is werk of þe deuyll

[2455] ¶ To þis sentence anon answerde dame prudens and saide [2456] ¶ Examineth *quod* sche þoure counsail and let vs se which of hem hap spoke most resonably and taught þou best counsail [2457] And for as moche as þe examinacioun is necessarie: let vs byginne at þe Surgiens and at þe phisiciens þat first speken in þis matiere [2458] ¶ I say þou þat þe surgiens and þe physiciens han sayd þow in þoure conseil discretly as hem ought [2459] and in here speche sayden ful wisely þat to þe office of hem appendith to doon to euery wight honour and profyt. and no wight to annoyne [2460] and after here craft to do gret diligence vn to þe cure of hem which þat þay haue in here gouernance [2461] And sire right as þay answerde wisely and discretly: [2462] Right so rede I þat þay be heihly and souerainly guerdoned for here noble speche / [2463] and eek for þey schullen do þe more ententyf besynes in þe curyng of þoure douȝter dere [2464] ¶ For al be it so þat þai be þoure frendes: þerfore schul ȝe nought suffre þat þay schul serue þow for nouȝt / [2465] But ȝe oughte þe rapere to guerdoune hem and schewe hem þoure largesse [2466] ¶ & as touchynge þe proposiciouns whiche þe phisiciens han schewed þou in þis caas þis is to sayn [2467] þat in maladyes oon contrarie is warissched by another contrarie. [2468] I wolde fayn knowe þilke text and how þay vnderstonde it and what is þoure entente [2469] ¶ Certes *quod* Melibeus vnderstonden it is in þis wise [2470] þat right as þay han do me a contrarie: right so schold I do hem another [2471] ¶ For right as þai han venged hem on me and doon me wrong: Right so schal I venge me vp on hem

and doon hem wrong^t [2472] and þanne haue I cured oon contrarie by anoþer

[2473] ¶ lo lo *quod* Dame prudence how lightly is euery man enclyned to his oughne plesaunce and to his oughne desir [2474] ¶ Certes *quod* sche þe wordes of þe phisiciens ¹ne schulde nouȝt^t haue ben vnderstonde sone in þat wise [2475] ¶ For certes wikkednesse is no contrarie to wikkednesse. ne vengauⁿs to vengeaunce. ne wrong^t to wrong^t: but þai ben semblable [2476] And þefore on vengeaunce is nouȝt^t wariss^hed by anoþer vengeaunce. ne oon wrong^t by anoþer wrong^t. [2477] but euerych of hem encreseth and engreggith oþer [2478] ¶ But certes þe wordes of þe phisiciens schul ben vnderstonde in þis wise. [2479] For good and wikkednesse ben tuo contraries. and pees and werre. vengeaunce & sufferaunce. Discord and accord and many oþer þinges [2480] ¶ but certes wikkednes schal be warriss^hed by goodnesse. Discord by accord. werre by pees and so forth of oþer þinges [2481] ¶ And her-to accordith seint paul þe apostil in many places [2482] ¶ He saith. ne ȝeldith nouȝt^t harm for harm. ne wikked speche for wikked speche [2483] ¶ But do wel to him þat doþ þe harm and blesse him that doþ þe harm [2484] and in many oþer places he amonesteth pees and accord [2485] ¶ But now wil I speke to ȝow of þe counseil which was ȝiue to ȝow by þe men of lawe & þe wise folkes [2486] þat sayde alle by oon accord as ȝe haue herd byfore [2487] That ouer alle þinges ȝe schal do ȝoure diligence to kepe ȝoure persone and to warmstore ȝoure hous. [2488] and seyden also þat in þis ȝow aughte for to wirche ful auysily and with gret^t deliberacioun. [2489] ¶ And sire as to þe firste poynt þat touched to þe kepinge of ȝoure persone: [2490] ȝe schul vnderstonde. þat he þat hap werre: schal euermore deuoutly and mekely prayen biforn alle þinges [2491] þat Ihū crist wil of his mercy

haue him in his proteccioun and ben his souerayn helpyng
 at his neede / [2492] ¶ For certes in þis world þer nys no
 wight þat may be counseiled or kept sufficaun[t]ly wip-
 oute þe kepinge of oure lord ihū *crist* [2493] ¶ To þis
 sentence accordeþ þe prophete Dauid þat seith [2494]
 ¶ If god ne kepe not þe citee. in ydel wakith he þat kepith
 hit [2495] ¶ Now sire þanne schul 3e committe þe kepinge of
 3oure persone to 3oure trewe frendes þat ben approued
 and y-knowe [2496] and of hem schul 3e axen help 3oure
 persone to kepe ¶ For Catoun saith ¶ If þou haue
 neede of help: axe it of þy freendes. [2497] For þer is
 noon so good a phisicien at neede: as is a trewe frend.
 [2498] ¶ And after þis: þan schal 3e kepe 3ou fro alle
 straunge folkes and fro lyeres and haue alway in suspect/
 here compaignye [2499] ¶ For Pieres alfons saith ¶ Ne
 take no compaignie by the ¹way of a straunge man. but/
 so be þat þou knowe him of a lenger tyme [2500]
 And if so be he falle in to þy compaignye par
 auenture wipouten þin assent: [2501] enquire þanne
 as subtilly as þou maist of his conuersacioun and of his lyf
 bifore and feyne þy way and say þat þou wilt go pider
 as þou wolt nought goon [2502] ¶ And if he bere a spere
 ¶ hold þe on the right syde ¶ And if he bere a swerd:
 holde þe on þe lyft syde. [2503] and so after þis.
 þanne schul 3e kepe 3ou wisely from al such
 peple as I haue sayd bifore / and hem and here conseil
 eschiewe [2504] ¶ And after þis. þanne schul 3e kepe 3ow
 in such manere [2505] þat for eny presumpcioun of 3oure
 strengþe þat 3e despise not þe
 might of 3oure aduersarie so lite þat 3e lete þe
 kepinge of 3oure persone for 3oure presumpcioun. [2506]
 For eny wis man dredeþ his enemy [2507] ¶ And
 Salomon saith ¶ weleful is he þat of alle hap drede.
 [2508] For certes he þat þurgh hardynes of his
 herte and þurgh þe hardinesse of himself. hap to
 gret presumpcioun: him schal euyl bitide [2509] ¶ þanne

schal 3e euermore counterwayte enbusshement³ and alle
 espiaille [2510] ¶ For Senec saith þat þe wise man
 þat dredip harmes / eschiewith harmes. [2511] ne he ne
 fallip in to noone perils þat perils eschiewep [2512] ¶ And al
 be it so þat þe seme þat þou art in sikur place: 3it
 schaltow alway do þy diligence in kepyng^t of þy persone
 [2513] ¶ This is to say ¶ Be not^t necgligent^t to kepe þy
 persone nough^t oonly for þy gretteste enemyes: but fro þy
 lest^t enemyes [2514] ¶ Senec saith ¶ A man þat is
 wel auysed: he dredip his lest^t enemy [2515] ¶ Ovide
 seiþ þat þe litel wesil wol sle þe grete bole and þe
 wilde hert. [2516] ¶ And þe book^t seiþ. a litel þorn
 wol prikke a þing^t ful sore. ¶ And an hound wol
 holde þe wilde boore [2517] ¶ But napeles I say not^t þat
 3e schul be so moche a coward þat 3e doute where is no
 neede or drede [2518] ¶ þe book^t seiþ þat som folk^t haue
 gret^t lust to disceyue ¶ but 3it þay dreden hem to be de-
 ceeyued [2519] ¶ 3et^t schal 3e drede to ben empoisoned
 ¶ And kepe þe fro þe companye of scorners [2520]
 For þe book^t saith with scorners make no compaignye
 but flee hem and here wordes as venym

[2521] ¶ Now as to þe secounde poynt where as 3oure
 wise counseilours warnede 3ow to warmstore 3oure hous
 with gret diligence: [2522] I wolde fayn wite ¹how þat
 3e vnderstoode pilke wordes what is 3oure sentence

[2523] ¶ Melibeus answerde and saide ¶ Certes I vnder-
 stonde it in þis wise þat I schal warmstore myn hous
 with toures suche as han castiles and oper maner
 edifices and armure and artilries [2524] by suche
 þinges I may my persone & myn hous so kepen and
 edifien and defenden þat myn enemyes schul be in drede myn
 hous to approche

[2525] ¶ To þis sentence answerde dame prudence
 ¶ warmstorynge quod sche of heihe toures and grete
 edifices [.] [2526] . . .
 no gap] wip grete

costages and gret trauaile and whan þat þay ben accomplished 3it beþ þay nouȝt worth a straw but if þey be defended by trewe frendes þat beþ olde and wise [2527] ¶ And vnderstondeþ þat þe grettest strength or garnisoun that þe riche man may haue as wel to kepe his persone as his goodes is [2528] þat he be biloued wiþ his subgites and wiþ his neighebouris [2529] ¶ For þus saith tullius ¶ That þer is a maner garnisoun þat no man may venquisshe ne discomfite and þat is [2530] a lord to be biloued with his citezeins and of his peple

[2531] ¶ Now þanne as to ȝoure þridde poynt where as ȝoure olde and wyse counseillours sayde. ȝe oughte nought sodeinly ne hastily procede in þis neede. [2532] but þat ȝe oughte purueyen ȝow and apparaile ȝow in þis caas wiþ greet diligence and gret deliberacioun: [2533] trewely I trowe þat þay sayden soþ and right wisely [2534] ¶ For Tullius saith ¶ In euery nede er þou bigynne it/ apparaile þe wiþ greet diligence [2535] ¶ Thanne say I þat in vengeance takinge in werre in bataile and in warmstoringe of þin hous [2536] er þou bygynne I rede þat þou apparaile þe þerto and do it with gret deliberacioun. [2537] For tullius saith ¶ That long apparaylyng byfore þe bataille: makeþ schort victorie [2538] ¶ And Cassidorus saith ¶ The garnisoun is strengier whan it is long tyme auysed

[2539] ¶ But now let vs speke of þe conseil þat was accorded by ȝoure neighebouris suche as doon ȝou reuerence wiþoute loue. [2540] ¶ ȝoure olde enemyes recounsilid [2541] þat counseile ȝow certeyn þinges pryuely and openly counseile ȝow þe contrarie [2542] ¶ þe ȝonge also þat counsaile ȝow to make werre and venge ȝow anon [2543] ¶ And certes sire as I haue sayd byform ȝe haue gretly erred to haue cleped such maner folk to ȝoure conseil [2544] whiche be now repreued by þe resouns byfore sayd [2545] ¶ But napeles let vs now descende to

þe purpose special ¶ 3e schul first^t procede after þe doctrine of
Tullius [2546] ¶ Certes þe troupe of þis or
þis counseil nedep^þ nought^t diligently enquire [2547] For it^t
is wel wist^t whiche it ben þat^t doon to 3ow þis
trespas and vilonye [2548] & how many trespasoures
and in what maner þay han to 3ow doon al þis
wrong^t and al þis vilonye [2549] ¶ And after þat
schul 3e examyne þe secounde condicioun which
Tullius addip^þ þer to in þis matier [2550]
¶ Tullius put a þing^t which þat he clepeth couetynge. þis
is to sayn [2551] who ben þay and whiche ben þay and how
many þat consentid to þis matiere and to þy counsail in þy
wilfulnesse to do hasty vengeaunces [2552] & let^t vs considere
also who ben þo and how many ben þo [.
. . . *no gap*] þat^t ben counseilours to 3oure aduersaries. [2553]
and certes as to þe first poynt it^t is wel knowen whiche
folk^t ben þay þat consentid to 3oure first/ wilful-
nes. [2554] For trewly alle þo þat^t counsailled 3ow
to make sodeyn werre bep^þ nou3t^t 3oure frendes [2555]
¶ let^t vs considre whiche ben þo þat^t 3e holde
so gretly 3oure frendes as to 3oure persone [2556] ¶ For
al be it^t so þat^t 3e be mighty and riche: certes 3e
been alloone. [2557] for certes 3e haue no childe
but^t a dou3ter. [2558] ne 3e haue no breþeren ne cosins
germayns ne noon oþer neigh kynrede / [2559] wherfore
þat^t 3oure enemyes for drede schulden stynte for to plede wip
3ou and stryue 3oure persone [2560] ¶ 3e knowe
also þat^t 3oure richesces mooten in diuers parties
be departed. [2561] and whan euery wight^t hap
his part^t: þay wol take but^t litel reward to venge
þy deth [2562] ¶ But^t þyne enemyes ben þre and
haue many children breþeren. cosynes and oþere neigh
kynrede. [2563] and þough it so were 3e hadde
slayn of hem tuo or thre: 3et^t dwellen þere ynowe to wreke
here deth and sle þi persone [2564] ¶ And þough so
were þat^t 3oure kynrede were more sekir and stedefast þan

þe kynrede of ȝoure aduersaries: [2565] ȝit^t napeles ȝoure
 kynrede nis but^t litel kinrede and litel sib
 to ȝow [2566] and þe kyn of ȝoure enemyes ben neigh sibbe
 to hem. and certes as in þat^t here condicioun is bet^t þan
 ȝoures [2567] ¶ þanne let^t vs considere also if^t þe
 counseilynge of hem þat^t counseiled ȝow to take sodein
 vengeance whepir it accorde to resoun [2568] &
 certes ¹ȝe knowe wel nay [2569] ¶ For as by right^t and
 resoun þer may no man take vengeance vpon no wight^t but^t
 þe Iugge þat/ haþ iurediccioun of it^t [2570] whan it is
 y-graunted him to take þilke vengeance hastily or at-
 temperelly as þe lawe requireth. [2571] and ȝit more-
 ouer of þilke word þat^t Tullius clepith *consentyng*
 [2572] þou schalt considre if^t þy might^t and þy power
 may consente and suffice to þy wilfulnes and to þy
 conseilours. [2573] and certes þou maist/ wel say
 þat^t nay / [2574] For sicurly as for to speke properly
 we may doo no þing^t but^t oonly oon þing/ which we may
 do rightfully [2575] ¶ And certes rightfully may ȝe
 take no vengeance as of ȝoure owne auctorite [2576]
 ¶ Than may ȝe se þat^t ȝoure power consentith
 not^t ne accordith not^t wiþ ȝoure wilfulnesse [2577] ¶ let^t
 vs now examyne þe þridde poynt þat^t Tullius clepeþ
 consequente. [2578] þou schalt vnderstonde þat^t þe
 vengeance þat^t þou purposiddest^t for to take is conse-
 quent^t. [2579] and þer of folweþ anoþer vengeance.
 peril and werre and oþer damages wiþoute nombre
 of whiche we be not^t war as at þis tyme [2580] ¶ And
 as touching^t þe fourþe poynt that^t tullius clepeþ en-
 gendrynge: [2581] þou schalt considre þat^t þis wrong^t
 which þat^t is doon to þe is engendred of þe hate of
 þin enemyes [2582] and of þe vengeance takinge vp
 þat^t wolde engendre anoþer vengeance & moche sorwe
 and wastyng^t of riches as I sayde

[2583] ¶ Now sire as to þe poynt^t þat^t Tullius
 clepith causes whiche þat^t þe laste poynt^t [2584] þou

schalt' vnderstonde þat' þe wrong' þat' þou hast receyued
 haþ certeyn causes [2585] whiche þat' clerkes calle
 Orience and Officience. and causa longinqua. and causa
 propinqua. þis is to say. þe fer cause. and þe neigh
 cause. [2586] for þe fer cause is almighty god þat' is
 cause of alle þinges. [2587] þe nere cause is þe
 þre enemyes. [2588] þe cause accidental was hate.
 [2589] þe causes materiales been þe fyue woundes of
 þy doughter. [2590] the cause formal is þe maner of
 here werkyng' þat' brough't in laddres and clombe in at
 þin wyndowes. [2591] þe cause final was for to sle þy
 doughter hit' letted nouȝt' in as moche as was in hem [2592]
 ¶ But for to speke of þe fer cause as to what' ende þay
 schal come or what schal finally betyde of hem in þis
 cause. can I not deme but by comittyng' and by
 supposyng'. [2593] For we schul suppose þat' þay schul
 come to a wikked ende [2594] by cause þat' þe book'
 of degrees saith ¶ Seelden or wiþ gret' peyne ben causes
 I-brought' to ¹a good ende. whan þay ben euyl bygonne

[2595] Now sire if men wolde axe me why þat'
 ȝe suffrede men to do ȝow þis wrong' and vilonye? Certes I
 can not' wel answeere as for no sobfastnes [2596] For
 þe apostil saith. þat' þe sciences and þe Iuggements of
 oure lord god almyghty ben ful deepe [2597] ¶ Ther may
 no man comprehende ne serchen hem sufficiiauntly [2598]
 ¶ Natheles by certeyn *presumpciouns* and coniectinges
 I holde and bilieue [2599] þat' god which þat' is ful of
 iustice and of rightwisnesse haþ suffred þis to betyde by
 iuste cause resonable

[2600] ¶ Thy name Melibe is to say a man
 þat' drynkeþ hony. [2601] þou hast' y-dronke so moche
 hony of sweete temperel riches and delices and hon-
 ours of þis world [2602] þat' þou art' dronke and
 hast forȝete Ihū crist' þy creatour. [2603] þou
 hast' not' doon him such honour and reuerence as þe
 oughte to doone. [2604] ne þou hast' nouȝt' wel taken keep to

þe wordes of Ovide þat saith [2605] ¶ vnder þe hony
 of þy goodes of þy body is hid þe venym þat sleep
 þi soule [2606] ¶ And Salomon saith ¶ If þou haue
 fouunde hony. ete of it þat sufficeþ. [2607] For if þou
 ete of it out of mesure. þou schalt spewe and be nedý
 and pouere. [2608] and perauenture crist hap þe in
 despit. and hath torned away fro þe his face and his
 eeres of misericorde [2609] ¶ And also he hap suffred
 þat þou hast ben punysshed in þe maner þat þou
 hast I-trespased [2610] ¶ Thou hast doon synne azeinst
 oure lord crist. [2611] for certes þi þre enemyes of man-
 kinde þat is to say þy flessch þe feend and þe
 world. [2612] þou hast y-suffred hem to entre in to þin
 herte wilfully by þe wyndow of þy body [2613] and
 hast nouȝt defended þiself sufficiently agayns here ascentis
 and here temptaciouns So þat þay haue woundid þi
 soule in fyue places [2614] This is to sayn þe dedly
 synnes þat ben entred in to þin herte by þy fyue
 wyndowes [2615] ¶ And in þe same maner oure lord crist
 hath wolde and suffred þat þy þre enemyes ben entred
 in to þin hous by þe wyndowes [2616] and haue
 I-woundid þi doughter in þe forsayde maner

[2617] ¶ Certes quod Melibeus I se wel þat ȝe en-
 force ȝow moche by wordes to ouercome me. in such
 manere þat I schal not venge me on myn enemyes [2618]
 schewynge me þe perils and þe yueles þat mighten
 falle of þis vengeaunce [2619] ¶ But who-so wolde considre
 in alle vegeaunces þe periles and þe yueles þat mighten folwe
 of vengeaunces takynge. [2620] a man wolde neuer take
 vengeaunce and þat were harm. [2621] For by venge-
 aunce takynge be ¹wikked men destroyed and disseuered fro
 þe goode men. [2622] and þay þat haue wille to wikked-
 nes restreignen here wikked purpos whan þay seen þe
 punysshynge and þe chastisynge of trespasours [2623]

[.

[2624]

 *no gap in the MS.*

[2625] ¶ And ȝit say I more þat right so as a sengle
 persone synneþ in taking of vengeaunce! [2626]
 Right so þe Iugge synneþ if he doo no vengeaunce
 on him þat it haþ deserued [2627] ¶ For Senec saith
 þus ¶ he þat maister is he saith good to reprove schrewes
 [2628] And as Cassoder saith ¶ A man dredeþ to doon
 outrage whan he woot and knoweþ þat it displeseþ
 to þe Iugges and þe soueraynes. [2629] and anoþer saith ¶ The
 Iugge þat dredeþ to demen right makeþ schrewes //
 [2630] And seint poul þappostoil saith in his epistil
 whan he writeþ to þe romayns ¶ The Iugges bere
 not þe spere wiþoute cause. [2631] but þay beren it
 to punyssh þe schrewes and mys doers and for to defende
 wiþ þe goode men. [2632] If ȝe wol take vengeaunce
 on ȝoure enemyes ȝe schul retourne or haue recours
 to þe Iugges þat haue iurediccioun vpon hem [2633]
 and he schal pun[i]ssche hem as þe law axeþ and requireþ

[2634] ¶ A quod melibeus þis vengeaunce likeþ me
 no þing! [2635] I byþenke me now and take heed
 how fortune haþ norissched me fro my childhode
 and haþ holpe me to passen many a strayt passage [2636]
 ¶ Now wol I aske her þat sche schal wiþ goddes help
 helpe me my schame for to venge

[2637] ¶ Certes quod prudence if ȝe wil wirche by my
 counseil. ȝe schul not assaye fortune by no maner way [2638]
 ne schul not lene ne bowe vnto hire after þe word of
 Senec [2639] ¶ For þinges þat beþ folye and
 þat beþ in hope of fortune schul neuer come to good
 ende [2640] ¶ And as þe same Senek saip ¶ The more
 cleer and þe more schynynge þat fortune is þe more
 brutal and þe sonner brekeþ sche. [2641] so trusteþ nought
 in hire For sche is nouȝt stedefast ne stable [2642] ¶ For
 whan þou wenest or trowest to be most seur of hir

help. sche wol fayle þe and deceyue þe. [2643] And wher as 3e say þat fortune haþ norissched 3ow fro 3oure childhode [2644] I say þat in so mochel 3e schul þe lasse truste in hire and in hire witte [2645] ¶ For Senek saith ¶ what man þat is norissched by fortune? sche makeþ him to gret a fool [2646] ¶ Now siþþe 3e desire and axe vengeaunce and þe vengeaunce þat is doon [.] [2647] *no gap*] in hope of fortune is perilous and vncerteyn [2648] þanne haueþ noon ¹oper remedye but for to haue recours vnto þe soueraigne Iugge þat vengith alle vilonies and wronges [2649] and he schal venge 3ow after þat himself witnesseth where as he saith [2650] ¶ leueþ þe ve[n]geaunce to me and I schal 3elde it

[2651] ¶ Melibeus answerd. If I ne venge me nouȝt of þe vilonye þat men haue doon vnto me. [2652] I schalsounere warne hem þat han doon to me þat vilonye and alle opere to doo me anoper vilonye [2653] For it is writen ¶ Tak no vengeaunce of an old vilonye þou suffrest þin aduersarie do þe a newe vilonye. [2654] and also for my suffraunce men wolde do me so moche vilonye þat I mighte neither bere it ne susteyne it. [2655] and so schulde I be put over lowe [2656] For men say In moche sufferynge schal many þinges falle vnto whiche þou schal nouȝt mowe suffre

[2657] ¶ Certes quod prudence I graunte 3ow wel þat ouer mochil suffraunce is nouȝt good! [2658] but 3it folwiþ it nought þerof þat euery persone to whom men doon vilonye take of it vengeaunce. [2659] For it appertieneth and longeth al oonly to þe Iugges. For þay schul venge þe vilonyes and þe iniuries. [2660] and þerfore þe auctoritees þat 3e haue sayd aboue been oonly vnderstonden in þe Iugges [2661] ¶ For whan þay suffre to mochil þe wronges and þe vilonyes that ben doon

wipoute punysshynge [2662] þay somne not a man
oonly to doo newe wronges: but þay comaunde hit.
[2663] also þe wise man saith ¶ The Iugge þat correct-
eþ not þe synnere comaundith him and byddith him doon
anoþer synne [2664] ¶ And þe Iugges and souereignes mighten
in here lond so mochl suffren of þe schrewes and mys-doeres
[2665] þat þay schulde by such suffraunce by proces of
tyme wexen of such power and might þat þay schulde
put out þe Iugges and þe souereignes from here places
[2666] & atte laste do hem lese here lordschipes

[2667] But lete vs now putte þat 3e han leue to
venge 3ow. [2668] I say 3e ben nougt of might ne
power as now to venge 3ou [2669] ¶ For if he wolde make
comparisoun as to þe might ¶ Of 3oure aduersaries 3e schulde
fynde in many þinges þat I haue I-schewed 3ow er þis
þat here condicioun is bettre þan 3oures [2670] And
þerfore say I þat it is good as now þat 3e suffre and
be pacient

[2671] ¶ Forþermore 3e knowe þat after ¹þe
comune sawe it is a woodnesse a man to stryue with a
strenger or a more mighty man þan him-seluen is
[2672] And for to stryue wip a man of euene strengþe
þat is to say with as strong a man as he is. it is peril.
[2673] and for to stryue with a weykere it is folye
[2674] and þerfore schulde a man fle stryuyng as
moche as he mighte [2675] ¶ For Salomon seith ¶ It is a
gret worschipe a man to kepe him fro noyse and
stryf [2676] ¶ And if it so bifalle or happe þat a man
of gretter might and strengthe þan þou art do þe
greuaunce [2677] stude and busye þe rapre to stille
þe same greuaunce þan for to venge þe [2678] ¶ For
Senec saith. he putteþ him in a gret peril þat
stryueth wip a gretter man þan he himseluen is [2679]
¶ And Catoun saith ¶ If a man of heiher estat or degre or
more mighty þen þou do þe anoþer grieuance:
Suffre him. [2680] For he þat hap oones don þe a grieuance

may anoþer tyme relieue þe and helpe þe. [2681] 3it sette I a caas 3e haue bothe might and licence to venge 3ow: [2682] I say þer ben ful many þinges þat schulde restreinge 3ow of vengeaunce takynge [2683] and make 3ow to encline to suffre and to haue pacience of þe wronges þat han ben doon to 3ow. [2684] First and forward 3e wol conside þe defautes þat been in 3oure owne persone. [2685] for whiche defautes god haþ suffred 3ow to haue þis tribulacioun as I haue sayd 3ow her byfore [2686] ¶ For þe poete saith // we oughten paciently to suffre þe tribulacioun þat cometh to vs whan þat we þenken and consideren þat we han deserued to haue hem [2687] ¶ And seint poul saith þat whan a man considereþ wel þe nombre of his defautes and of his synnes: [2688] þe peynes and þe tribulaciouns þat he suffereþ semen þe lasse vnto him [2689] ¶ and in as moche as him þenkiþ his synnes þe more heuy and greuou: [2690] in so moche his peyne is þe lighter and þe more esier vn-to him [2691] ¶ Also 3e oughten to encline and bowe 3oure herte to take þe pacience of oure lord ihū crist. as seiþ seint peter in his epistles [2692] ¶ Ihū crist he seiþ haþ suffred for vs and 3iuen ensample vnto euery man to folwe and sewe him. [2693] For he dede neuer synne ne neuer cam vileyns worde out of his moup [2694] whan men cursed him: he cursed hem not ¶ And whan men beete him: he manased hem not. [2695] ¶ Also þe grete pacience which þat seintes þat been in paradys¹ han had in tribulaciouns þat þay haue had and suffred withoute desert/ or gult [2696] oughte moche stire 3ow to pacience [2697] ¶ Forþer more 3e schul enforce 3ow to haue pacience [2698] consideringe þat þe tribulaciouns of þis world but litel while enduren & soone passed ben and goon [2699] ¶ And þe ioie þat a man secheþ to haue by pacience in tribulaciouns is perdurable after þat þe

apostil seiþ in his epistil [2700] ¶ The ioye of god he seiþ is perdurable þat is to say euer-more lastynge [2701] ¶ Also troweth and bilieueþ stedefastly þat he is not wel norisched and taught þat can noughþ haue pacience or wil nouȝt receyue pacience [2702] ¶ For Salomon saith þat þe doctrine and þe witte of a man is I-knowe by pacience [2703] ¶ And in anoþer place he seiþ ¶ he þat hath pacience: gouerneþ him by gret prudence [2704] ¶ And þe same salamon seiþ. þat þe wrapful and þe angry man makeþ noyses. and þe pacient man attempereth and stilleþ him. [2705] he seiþ also ¶ It is more worth to be pacient þan for to be right strong. [2706] And And he þat may haue his lordschipe of his oughne herte: is more worþ and more to preise þan he þat by his force & by his strengthe takeþ grete citees [2707] ¶ And þerfore saith seint Iame in his epistil þat pacience is a gret vertu of perfeccioun.

[2708] [.]

. *no gap* [2709] but euery man may not haue þe perfeccioun þat ȝe seekyn [2710] ne I am not of þe nombre of right partyte men: [2711] For myn herte may neuer be in pees vnto þe tyme it be venged [2712] ¶ And al be it/ so that it was a gret peril to myne enemyes to don me a vilonye in takinge vengeaunce vpon me: [2713] ȝit taken þay noon heede of þe peril but filden here wikked desir and her corrage. [2714] and þerfore me þenkith men oughten nought repreue me þough I putte me in a litel peril for to venge me [2715] ¶ And þough I do a gret excesse þat is to say þat I venge oon outrage by anoþer

[2716] ¶ A quod dame prudence ȝe say ȝoure wille and as ȝow likith. [2717] but in noon caas in þe world a man ne schulde nouȝt doon outrage ne excesse for to venge him. [2718] ¶ For Cassidore seiþ. as euel doþ he þat auengith him by outrage as he þat doth þe

outrage / [2719] and þerfore 3e schul venge 3ow after
 þe ordre of right þat is to sayn by þe lawe and nouȝt
 by excesse ne by outrage [2720] ¶ And also if 3e wil
 venge 3ow of þe outrage of 3oure aduersaries in oþer
 maner þan right comaundeþ: 3e synnen [2721] ¶ And
 þerfore seiþ Senec / that ¹a man schal neuer venge
 schrewednes by schrewednes. [2722] ¶ And if 3e say
 þat axeþ a man to defende violence by vyolence.
 and fightyng by fightyng [2723] ¶ Certes 3e say soþ
 whan þe defence is doon anon wiþouten interuall or
 wiþouten taryinge or dilay [2724] for to defenden him
 and nought for to venge him [2725] ¶ And it bihoueþ
 a man putte such attemperance in his defence:
 [2726] þat men haue no cause ne matiere to repreuen
 him that defendith him of excesse and outrage [. . .
 no gap] [2727] ¶ Parde 3e knowe wel
 þat 3e make no defence as now for to defende 3ow
 but for to venge 3ow [2728] and so semeþ it / þat 3e
 haue no wille to do 3oure wille attemperelly [2729] &
 þerfore me þenkiþ þat pacience is good ¶ For Salamon
 saith þat he þat is not pacient schal haue gret
 harm .

[2730] ¶ Certes quod melibeus I graunte 3ou wel þat
 whan a man is impacient and wroth. [.

 no gap] [2731] for þe lawe saith
 þat he is coupable þat entremettith him or mellith him with
 such þing as aperteyneþ not vnto him [2732] ¶ Dan
 Salamon seiþ. he þat entremetteþ him of þe
 noyse or stryft of anoþer man. is lik þat takith
 þe hound by þe eeres. [2733] For right as he þat
 takip þe strong hound by þe eeres is oþer while biten with
 þe hound: [2734] riȝt in þe same wise it is resoun þat
 he haue harm þat by his impacience melleþ him of
 þe noise of anoþer man where it aperteyneþ not to
 him [2735] ¶ But/ 3e schul knowe wel þat þis dede þat

is to sayn myn disease and my grief^t toucheþ me right^t neigh. [2736] and þerfore þough I be wroþ^t it is no meruayle. [2737] and sauynge þour grace I can not^t see þat^t it^t mighte gretly harme me þough I toke vengeance. [2738] For I am richer and more mighty þan myne enemyes been / [2739] And wel knowe þe þat^t by money and by hauynge of^t grete possessions ben alle þe þinges of^t þis world gouernede [2740] ¶ And Salamon saith þat^t alle þinges obeyen to moneye / dispraisynge þe power of^t his aduersaries

[2741] [.]

.
 no gap] ¶ Tho sche spak^t and sayde in þis wyse [2742] ¶ Certes deere sire I graunte þow þat^t þe ben riche and mighty [2743] and þat^t richesse is good to hem þat^t wel haue geten it/ and þat^t wel conne vse it^t [2744] For right^t as þe body of^t a man may not be wipoute þe soule^t no more may a man lyue wipoute temperel goodes [2745] and by richesse may a man gete him greet frendschipe / [2746] ¹¶ And þerfore saith Pamphilles. If^t a neet-hurdes douȝter he seiþ be riche^t sche may cheese of^t a þousand men which she wol take to hir housbonde [2747] ¶ For of^t a þousand men oon wil not^t forsake hir ne refuse hire [2748] ¶ And þis pamphilles seiþ also ¶ If^t þou be right^t happy þat^t is to sayn if^t þou be right^t riche^t þanne schalt^t þou fynde a gret^t nombre of^t felawes and frendes [2749] ¶ And if^t þy fortune chaunge þat^t þou wax pore^t fare wel frendschipe. [2750] For þou schalt^t ben aloone wipouten eny companye but^t if^t it be þe compaignye of^t pore folk^t // [2751] And ȝit saith þis pamphillus more ouer ¶ That þey þat^t ben þral and bonde of^t linage schullen ben maad worþy and noble by richesse [2752] ¶ And right^t so as by richesse þer come many goodes^t Right^t so by pouert^t comen þer many harmes.[. . . .] [2753] [.]

. *no gap*] [2754] And þerfore clepeþ Cassidore pouert'. [.] ruyne. [2755] þat is to sayn þe moder of ouerþrowyng' or fallynge doun [2756] ¶ & þerfore Pieres alphonson of þe grettest aduersites of þis world is: [2757] whan a free man by kyn or burthe is constreigned by pouert' to eten þe almes of his enemyes [2758] ¶ And þe same seiþ Innocent' in oon of his bookes ¶ þat' sorweful & vnhappy is þe condicioun of a pouere begger. [2759] for if he axe nouȝt' his mete: he deyeth for hungir: [2760] and if he axe: he deyeth for schame. And algates þe necessite constreigneþ hym to axe. [2761] And þerfore seiþ Salamon þat' bettre it is to deye þan to haue such pouert' [2762] And as þe same Salamon saith Bettir is to deye on bitter deth þan for to lyue in such a wyse [2763] ¶ By þese resouns þat' I haue sayd vnto ȝow and by many anoþer resoun þat' I knowe and couþe say [2764] I graunte ȝow þat' riches ben goode to hem þat' gete hem wel. & to hem þat' hem wel vsen [2765] ¶ And þerfore wol I schewe ȝow how ȝe schulde bere ȝow in getyng' of riches and in what' maner ȝe schulde vse hem

[2766] ¶ First' ȝe schulde gete hem wiþoute gret' desir by good leysfr sokyngly and nouȝt' ouer hastily [2767] ¶ For a man þat is to desiryng' for to gete riches abandoneth him first' to þeste and to alle oþere yueles [2768] ¶ And þerfore seiþ Salamon ¶ he þat' hastith him to bisyly to waxe riche: schal ben noon Innocent' [2769] ¶ He seiþ also þat' þe riches þat' hastily comeþ to a man: soone & lightly goth and passeth fro a man [2770] ¶ But' þat' riches þat' comeþ alway litel and litel waxeþ alway and multiplieþ [2771] ¶ And sire ȝe schal gete riches by ȝoure witte and by ȝoure trauayle vnto ȝoure profyt' [2772] and þat' wiþoute wrong' or harm doyng' to eny oþer persone [2773] ¶ For þe lawe

saith þat no man makeþ himself riche þat dop
 harm to anoþer wight. [2774] þis is to say. þat
 nature defendeþ and forbedith by right þat no man
 make himself riche vnto þe harm of anoþer persone.
 [2775] Tullius saith. þat no sorwe ne drede
 of deth. ne thought þat may falle to a man [2776]
 is so moche azeinst nature as a man to encresce his
 oughne profyt to þe harm of anoþer man [2777] ¶ And
 þough þe grete men and þe riche men gete richesse more
 lightly þan þou: [2778] 3it schalt þou not be ydil ne
 slowe to þy profyt/ For þou schalt in alle wise flee ydil-
 nes. [2779] For Salamon saith þat ydelnesse techip
 a man to do many yueles [2780] ¶ And þe same salamon
 saip þat he þat trauaileth and besieþ him to tilye
 þe lond schal ete þe breed. [2781] But he þat is ydil and
 casteþ him to no busynesse ne occupacioun schal falle in to
 pouert and deye for hunger [2782] ¶ And he þat is
 ydel and slough can neuer fynde him tyme for to
 do his profyt [2783] ¶ For þer is a versifiour saith;
 þe ydel man excuseþ him in wynter by cause of þe
 grete colde. And in somer by enchesoun of þe grete hete.
 [2784] ¶ For þese causes saith Catoun ¶ waketh and enclineþ
 3ow nouȝt ouer moche for to slepe. For ouermuche reste
 norischeþ and causeþ many vices [2785] ¶ And þefore
 saith seint Ierom: Dop some goode deedes þat þe deuel
 which þat is oure enemy ne fynde 3ow vnoccupied
 [2786] ¶ For þe deuel ne takip not lightly vnto his werkes
 suche as he fyndeth occupied in goode werkes

[2787] ¶ þanne þus in getynge of riches 3e
 moot flee ydelnesse / [2788] ¶ and afterward 3e schul vse
 þe richesþes þe whiche 3e han geten by 3oure witte and by
 3oure trauaile [2789] in such a maner þat men
 holde 3ow not skarce / ne to sparynge ne to fool large
 þat is to say ouer large a spender [2790] For right as
 men blamen an auerous man by cause of his skarsete
 and chyncherie [2791] in þe same manere is he to blame

þat^t spendeth ouer largely [2792] ¶ And þerfore saith
 Catoun ¶ Vse he saith þi riches þat^t þou hast^t y-ge-
 ten [2793] in such a manere þat^t þay haue no matier ne
 cause to calle þe neiþer wrecche ne chynche [2794]
 ¶ For it is gret^t schame to a man to¹ haue a pouer herte
 and a riche purse [2795] ¶ He saith also þe goodes þat^t
 þou hast^t I-ge-ten vse hem by mesure þat is to say
 spende hem mesurably [2796] For þay þat^t folily wasten
 and spenden þe goodes þat^t þay haue^t [2797] whan
 þay haue no more *propre* of^t here ouȝtne^t þay schape hem
 to take þe goodes of^t anoþer man [2798] ¶ I say thanne
 ȝe schul flee auarice [2799] vsynge ȝour richesse
 in such manere þat [. . . *no gap*] ȝoure [. . . .]
 be buried. [2800] but^t þat^t ȝe haue þanne in ȝoure
 might^t and in ȝoure weldynge. [2801] For þe wise man
 reproveþ þe auerous man and saith þus in tuo
versus [2802] ¶ wher-to and why burieth a man his
 goodes by his auarice and knowiþ wel þat^t needes
 most^t he deye. [2803] for deth is þe ende of^t euery man
 as in this present^t lif. [2804] And for what cause or
 enchesoun ioyneþ he him or knetteþ him so fast^t
 vnto his goodes [2805] þat^t alle his wit^tes mowe nought^t
 disseuer him or departe him fro his goodes
 [2806] & knowiþ wel or ouȝhte knowe wel þat^t whan he
 is deed he schal no þing^t bere with him out^t of^t þis
 world. [2807] ¶ And þerfore seiþ seint/ Austyn þat^t
 þe auerous man is likned vnto helle. [2808] þat^t þe
 more þat^t it^t swolwith þe more it desireþ to swolwe and
 deuoure [2809] ¶ And as wel as ȝe wolde eschewe to be
 cleped an auerous man or chinche^t [2810] as wel
 schulde ȝe kepe ȝow and gouerne ȝow in such a wise
 þat^t men cleped ȝow nouȝt^t fool large [2811] ¶ Therfore saiþ
 Tullius ¶ The goodes he saiþ of^t þin hous schulde
 nought^t ben hidde ne kepte so clos^t but^t þat^t þay might^t
 ben opened by pite and by bonairete [2812] þat^t is to
 sayn to ȝiue hem part^t þat^t han gret^t neede. [2813]

ne þy goodes schul not be so open to be euery mannes goodes [2814] ¶ Afterward in getyng of þoure riches and in vsynge hem 3e schul alway haue þre þinges in þoure herte [2815] þat is to say Oure lord god. Conscience. and good name. [2816] First 3e schul haue god in þoure herte [2817] and for no riches 3e schul in no manere doo no þing which might displese god þat is þour creatour and þoure maker. [2818] For after þe word of Salamon. It is better to haue litil good wip loue of god. [2819] þan to haue mochil good and tresor and lese þe loue of his lord god. [2820] And þe prophete saith. Better is to ben a good man and haue litel good þan tresore [2821] þe to ben holden a schrewe and haue gret riches [2822] ¶ And 3it say I forþer more þat 3e schuln alway doon þoure busynesse to gete 3ow riches. [2823] so þat 3e gete hem with good conscience [2824] ¶ And þe apostil seith. ther ¹nys þing in þis world of which we schuln haue so gret ioye as whan oure conscience bereþ vs good witnes [2825] ¶ And þe wise man saith substaunce of a man is ful good whan synne is not in his conscience. [2826] Afterward in getyng of þoure riches and in vsynge of hem [2827] þou most haue gret busynesse & gret diligence þat þoure good name be alway kept and conserued [2828] ¶ For Salamon saith. better it is and more abelith a man for to haue a good name þan for to haue gret riches [2829] and þerfore he saith in anoper place. Do gret diligence saith Salamon in kepyng of þy frend and of þy good name. [2830] For it schal lenger abyde wip þe þan eny tresor be it neuer so precious [2831] ¶ And certes he schulde nouȝt be cleped a gentil man þat after god and good conscience alle þinges left ne doþ his diligence and busynesse to kepe his good name. [2832] And Cassidore saith þat it is signe of a good man & a gentil or of a gentil herte whan a man loueþ or desireþ to

haue a good name. [2833] and þerfore saith seint^t augustyn þat^t þer ben tuo þinges þat^t ben necessarie and needful [2834] and þat is good conscience and good loos [2835] þat^t is to sayn. good conscience in þin oughne persone inward. and good loos of^t þin neghebor outward. [2836] and he þat^t trusteþ him so moche in his good conscience [2837] þat^t he displeseþ and settiþ at nought his good name or loos and rekkeþ nought þough he kepe not his good name: nys but^t a cruel churl

[2838] ¶ Sire now haue I schewed ȝow how ȝe schulde doon in getyng^t of^t good and riches and how ȝe schuld vse hem [2839] I see wel þat^t for þe trust^t þat^t ȝe haue in ȝoure riches: ȝe wolde meue werre and bataile [2840] ¶ I counseile ȝow þat^t ȝe bygynne no werre in trust^t of^t ȝoure riches. for thanne suffisen not^t werres to mayntene [2841] ¶ And þerfore saith a philosopre ¶ That man þat^t desireþ and wol algate haue werre: schal neuer haue sufficeaunce. [2842] For þe richere þat^t he is: þe gretter dispense most^t he make if^t he wol haue worschipe or victorie [2843] ¶ And Salamon saith. þe gretter riches þat^t a man haþ: þe moo despendours he haþ. [2844] And deere sire al be it^t so þat^t for ȝoure riches ȝe mowe haue moche folk: [2845] ȝit^t byhoueþ it^t not^t ne it is not^t good to bygynne werre þer as ȝe may in oþer maner haue pees vnto ȝoure worschipe and profyt. [2846] For þe victorie of^t batailles þat^t ben in þis world lith not^t in gret nombre or multitude of^t poeple ne in vertu of^t man: [2847] but it^t ¹lith in þe wille & in þe hond of^t oure lord god almighty [2848] And Iudas machabeus which was goddes knight^t [2849] whan he schulde fighte aȝeinst^t his aduersaries þat^t hadde a gretter nombre & a gretter multitude of^t folk and strengere þan was þe poeple of^t þis machabe. [2850] ȝit^t he reconforted his litel poeple / and sayde ryȝt^t in þis wise [2851] ¶ As lightly quod he may oure lord god almighty ȝiue victory to fewe folk.

[. . . *no gap*] [2852] For þe victorie of batailles comeþ nouȝt by þe grete nombre of poeple; [2853] but it comeþ fro oure lord god of heuen [2854] ¶ And dere sire for as moche as þer is no man certeyn if it be worþi þat god ȝiue him victorie [.
. *no gap*] or nouȝt after þat þat Salamon saiþ. [2855] þefore euery man schulde gretly drede werres to bygynne. [2856] And by cause þat in batailles falle many meruayles and periles [2857] and happeþ oþer while þat as soone is þe grete man slayn as þe litel man. [2858] and as it is writen in þe secounde book of kynges þe deedes of batayles be auenturous and no thing certeyn [2859] For as lightly is oon hurt with a spere as anoþer. [2860] and þefore is gret peril in werre. þefore schulde a man flee and eschewe werre in as moche as a man may goodly [2861] ¶ For Salamon saith. ¶ he þat loueth peril schal falle in peril

[2862] ¶ After þat dame prudens hadde spoke in þis maner; Mellibe answerde and sayde [2863] ¶ I se wel dame þat by ȝoure faire wordes and by ȝoure resouns þat ȝe haue schewed me þat þe werre likeþ ȝow no þing. [2864] but/ I haue not/ ȝit/ herd ȝoure counseil how I schal doo in þis neede

[2865] ¶ Certes quod sche I counseile ȝow þat ȝe accorde wiþ ȝoure aduersaries and þat ȝe haue pees with hem [2866] ¶ For seint Iame saiþ in his epistles þat by concord and pees þe smale rypes wexen grete. [2867] and by debaat and discord þe gret riches fallen doun [2868] ¶ And ȝe knowe wel þat oon of þe moste grettest and soueraign þinges þat is in þis world is vnite & pees [2869] ¶ And þefore saith oure lord ihū crist to his aposteles in þis wise [2870] ¶ wol happy and blessed be þay þat louen and purchacen pees. for þay ben called children of crist [2871] ¶ A quod Melibe. Now se I wel þat ȝe louen not myn honour ne my worschipe [2872] and knoweþ wel þat myne

aduersaries han bygonne þis debate and brige by here outrage [2873] And 3e see wel þat þay require ne praye me not of pees. ne þay askyn nouȝt to be recounseild: [2874] wol 3e þanne þat I goo & ¹meke me vnto hem and crie hem mercy. [2875] for soþe þat were not my worschipe [2876] ¶ For right as men seyn þat ouer gret pryde engendreþ despising. so fareþ it by to gret humblete or mekenesse

[2877] ¶ Thanne bygan dame prudence to make semblant of wrappe and sayde. [2878] Certes sire saue 3oure grace. I loue 3oure honour and 3oure profyt as I doo myn owne and euer haue doon [2879] 3e ne mowe noon oþer seyn [2880] ¶ And 3it if I hadde sayd 3e scholde haue purchaced pees and þe reconsiliacioun. I ne hadde not moche mys-take me ne seyð amys: [2881] For þe wise man saith. þe discencioun bigynneþ by anoþer man and þe reconsilynge bygynneþ by þyself [2882] ¶ And þe prophete saith ¶ Flee schame and schrewednesse and doo goodnesse. [2883] Seeke pees and folwe it as moche as in þe is. [2884] 3et seiþ he not þat 3e schul raþer pursewe to 3oure aduersaries for pees þan þei schul to 3ow. [2885] For I knowe wel þat 3e be so hard-herted þat 3e wil doo no þing for me [2886] ¶ And salamon saith. he þat is ouer hard herted atte laste he schal mys happe and my[s]-tyde

[2887] ¶ whan melibe had seyn dame prudence make semblaunce of wrappe: he sayde in þis wise. [2888] dame I pray 3ow þat 3e be not displeased of þinges þat I say [2889] For 3e knoweth wel þat I am angry and wroþ and þat is no wonder. [2890] and þay þat ben wroþ wot not wel what þay doon ne what þay say [2891] þerfore þe prophete saiþ þat troublit eyen haue no cleer sight [2892] ¶ But sayeth and counsaileþ me forþ as 3ow likeþ For I am redy to doo right as 3e wol desire. [2893] and if 3e reprove me of my folye: I am þe more holde to loue 3ow and to prayse

3ow [2894] ¶ For Salamon saip þat he þat repreueþ him þat doth folie: [2895] he schal fynde gretter grace þan he þat deceyueth him by swete wordes

[2896] ¶ Thanne sayde dame prudence I make no semblant of wrappe ne of anger but for 3oure grete profyt [2897] ¶ For Salamon saith. he is more worth þat reproueþ or chydeþ a fool for his folie schewynge him semblant of wrappe [2898] þan he þat supporteþ him and prayseþ him in his mysdoynge. and laugheþ at his folie [2899] ¶ And þis same Salomon saip afterward þat by þe sorweful visage of a man þat is to sayn by sory and heuy countenaunce of a man [2900] þe fool correcteþ himself and amendeþ

[2901] ¶ þanne sayde Melibeus. I schal not conne answer to so many resouns as 3e putten to me and schewen. [2902] sayeth schortly 3oure wille and 3oure counseil. and I am al redy to fulfille and *parfourme* it

[2903] ¶ Thanne dame prudence discouered al here counsail and hire wille vn-to him and sayde [2904] ¶ I counseile 3ow quod sche aboue alle þinges þat 3e make pees bitwen god and 3ow [2905] and beþ reconsiled vnto him and to his grace. [2906] for I haue sayd 3ow her biforn. God hath suffred 3ow haue þis [. . . *no gap*] disease for 3oure synnes [2907] and if 3e do as I say 3ow god wol sende 3oure aduersaries vnto 3ow [2908] and make hem falle at 3oure feet al redy to doo 3oure wille and 3oure comaundement [2909] ¶ For Salamon saith. whan þe condicioun of man is plesant and likyng to god: [2910] he chaungeþ þe hertes of þe mannes aduersaries and constreigneþ hem to biseke him of pees & of grace. [2911] and I pray 3ow let me speke wip 3oure aduersaries in priue place [2912] for þay schul not knowe it by 3oure wille or 3oure assent [2913] ¶ And þanne whan I knowe here wille and here assent: I may counseile 3ow þe more seurlly

[2914] ¶ Dame quod Melibeus doþ 3oure wille and

3oure likyng^t [2915] For I putte me holly in 3oure disposicioun and ordinaunce

[2916] ¶ Thanne Dame prudence whan sche seih þe good wille of hir housbond. sche deliuered and took^a a vis by hir self^t [2917] þenkyng^e how sche mighte bringe þis neede vnto a good conclusioun and to a good ende [2918] ¶ And whan sche saugh hire tyme^t sche sente for þese aduersaries to come vnto hire in to a priue place [2919] and schewed wysly vnto hem þe grete goddes þat^t comen of^t pees [2920] and þe grete harmes and perils þat^t ben in werre [2921] and sayde to hem in goodly manere how þat^t hem aughte to haue gret^t repentaunce [2922] of^t þe iniurie & wrong^t þat^t þay hadde doon to Melibe hire lord and vnto hire and hire douȝter.

[2923] and whan þay herden þe goodly wordes of dame prudence [2924] þey were þo surprised and rauyssched and hadden so gret ioye of^t hire þat^t wonder was to telle [2925] ¶ A lady quod thay. 3e haue schewed vnto vs þe blessing^t of^t swetnes after þe sawe of^t Dauid þe prophete [2926] for þe recounsilyng^t which we be nouȝt worþy to haue in no manere. [2927] But^t we oughten require it wiþ gret contricioun and humilite. [2928] 3e of^t 3oure grete goodnes haue presented vnto vs [2929] ¶ Now we se wel þat^t þe science of^t Salamon is ful trewe [2930] he saith þat^t swete wordes multiplen and encrescen frendes and maken schrewes to ben debonaire and meke.

[2931] certes quod þay we putten oure deede and al oure matier and cause al holly in 3oure good wille [2932] and ben redy to obeye to þe speche¹ and to þe comaundement^t of^t my lord Melibe. [2933] and þerfore deere & benigne lady we pray 3ow and byseke 3ow as meekely as we conne and may [2934] þat^t it like to 3owre grete goodnes to fulfille in deede 3oure goodliche wordes. [2935] For we considere and knowleche wel

þat we haue offended and greued my lord Melibe out of resoun and out of mesure [2936] so ferforth þat we ben nouȝt/ of power to make his amendes. [2937] and þerfore we oblie vs and bynde vs and oure frendes for to doo al his wille and his comaundementȝ. [2938] But perauenture he haþ such heuynes & such wrappe to vs ward by cause of oure offence! [2939] þat he wol enioyne vs such peyne as we mow not bere ne susteyne [2940] ¶ and þerfore noble lady we biseke to ȝoure wommanly pite [2941] to take such auysement in þis neede þat we ne oure frendes ben not disherited and destroyed þurgh oure folye

[2942] ¶ Certes quod dame prudence it is an hard þing and right a perilous [2943] þat a man put him al outrely in þe arbitracioun and Iuggement and þe might and power of his enemyes [2944] ¶ For Salamon saip leueþ and ȝiueþ credence to þat þat I schal say. I say quod he ȝeue poeple and gouernours of holy chirche [2945] to þy sone to þi wyf/. and to þy frend ne to þy brother [2946] ne ȝeue þou neuer might ne maystry of þy body whil þou lyuest [2947] ¶ Now sith he defendith a man schulde not ȝiue to his broþer ne to his frend þe might of his body. [2948] by a strenger resoun he defendeþ and forbedith a man to ȝiue his body to his enemye. [2949] but naþeles I counseile ȝow þat ȝe mystruste nouȝt my lord. [2950] For I wot wel and knowe verrailly þat he is debonaire and meke. large curteys [2951] and no þing desirous ne coueytous of good ne richesse. [2952] For þer nys no þing in þis world þat he desireth saue oonly worschipe and honour. [2953] Forþermore I knowe and am right seure þat he wol no þing doo in þis neede wiþoute counsail of me [2954] and I schal so worche in this cause þat by þe grace of oure lord god ȝe schul be recounsiled vnto vs

[2955] ¶ Thanne sayde þay with oon voys worschিপful

lady we putte vs and oure goodes al fully in 3oure wille and disposicioun [2956] and ben redy to come what day þat it like 3ow and vnto 3oure noblesse / to limite vs or assigne vs [2957] for to make oure obligacioun and bond as strong^r as it likeþ to 3oure goodnes [2958] þat we mowe fulfille þe wille of 3ow and of my lord Melibe

[2959] ¶ whan dame prudence had ¹herd þe answeres of þise men. sche bad hem go agayn pryuely [2960] and sche retourned to hir lord Melibe and tolde him how sche fond his aduersaries ful repentant [2961] knowlechinge ful lowely here synnes and trespasses and how þay were redy to suffre alle peyne [2962] requiring^r and praying^r him of mercy and pite

[2963] ¶ þanne saide Melibeus. he is wel worþy to haue pardoun and for3euenes of his synne þat excusith not his synne [2964] but knowlechep and repentith him axinge indulgence. [2965] For Senek^t saith. þere is þe remissioun and for3euenesse wher as þe confessioun is [2966] ¶ For confessioun is neighebor to Innocence [2967] And he saith in ano^{per} place. he þat hath schame of his synne knowlechith it/. [. no gap] and þerfore I assente and conferme me to haue pees. [2968] but it is good þat we doo it nou3t wipoute assent^r & þe wille of oure frendes

[2969] ¶ Thanne was prudence right glad & iolyf and sayde. [2970] Certes sire quod sche 3e ben wel and goodly auysed. [2971] for right^r as by þe counsail and assent and help of 3oure frendes 3e haue be stired to venge 3ow & make werre^t [2972] Right^r so wipoute here counseil schul 3e nought^r acorde 3ow ne haue pees wip 3oure aduersaries. [2973] For þe lawe saith. Ther nys no þing^r so good by way of kinde as þing^r to be vnbounde by him þat it was bounde

[2974] And þanne dame prudence wipoute delay or taryinge sente anon messageres for here kyn and for here olde frendes whiche þat were trewe and wyse [2975]

and tolde hem by ordre in þe presence of Melibe of þis matier as it is aboue expressed and declared [2976] and praide hem þat þay wolde ȝiue here avys and counseil what best were to doon in þis matiere [2977] ¶ And whan melibeus frendes hadde take here auys and deliberacioun of þe forsayde matier [2978] and hadden examyned it by greet besynes and gret diligence [2979] þey ȝafe him ful counsail to haue pees and reste. [2980] and þat Melibeus schulde wiþ good hert resceyue his aduersaries to forȝiuenes and mercy

[2981] ¶ And whan dame prudence had herd thassent of hir lord Melibeus and conseil of his frendes [2982] accorde wiþ hire wille & hire entencioun: [2983] sche was wonderly glad in herte and sayde [2984] ¶ Ther is a noble prouerbe þat saith ¶ The goodnesse þat þou maist do þis day: [2985] abyde not ne delaye it nouȝt vnto to morwe. [2986] and þerfore I counseile ȝow ȝe sende ȝoure messageres¹ whiche þat ben discrete and wise [2987] vnto ȝoure aduersaries tellynge hem on ȝoure bihalue [2988] þat if þay wol trete of pees and of accord [2989] þat þay schape hem wiþoute dilay or taryinge to come vnto vs. [2990] which þing was parformed in dede [2991] and whan þese trespasours and repentyng folk of here folies þat is to sayn þe aduersaries of Melibe [2992] hadden herd what þe messangeres sayden vnto hem: [2993] þay were right glad and iolif and answerden ful mekely and benignely [2994] ȝeldyng graces & þankinges to here lord Melibe and to al his compaignye [2995] and schope hem wiþout delay to go wiþ þe messangeres and obeye hem to þe comaundement of here lord Melibe

[2996] ¶ And right anon þay token here way to þe court of Melibe / [2997] and token wiþ hem some of here trewe frendes to make faith for hem and for to ben here borwes [2998] ¶ And whan þay were comen to

[¹ leaf 224, back]

þe presence of Melibeus he seyde hem þise wordes [2999] ¶ It stondith þus quod Melibeus and soþ it is þat 3e [3000] causeles and wipouten skile and resoun [3001] haue doon gret iniuries and wronges to me and to my wyf prudence and to my douzter also. [3002] For 3e haue entred in to myn hous by violence [3003] and haue doon such outrage þat alle men knowe wel þat 3e haue deserued þe deth. [3004] And þerfore wil I knowe and wite of 3ow [3005] wheþer 3e wol putte þe punyschment and þe chastisement and þe vengeance/ of þis outrage in þe wille of me and of my wif dame prudence or 3e wil not

[3006] ¶ þanne þe wisest of hem þre answerde for hem alle & sayde [3007] ¶ Sire quod he we knowe wel þat we be vnworþy to come to þe court of so gret a lord and so worþy as 3e be [3008] ¶ For we han so gretly mystake vs and haue offendid and giltid in such a wise ageins 3oure heighe lordschipe [3009] þat trewely we haue deserued þe deþ [3010] ¶ But 3it/ for þe greete goodnes and debonairete þat al þe world witnesseþ of 3oure persone! [3011] we submitten vs to þin excellence and benignite of 3oure gracious lordschipe [3012] and ben redy to obeye to alle 3oure comaundementz [3013] bisekyng 3ow þat of 3oure merciable pite 3e wol considre oure grete repentaunce and lowe submissioun [3014] and graunte vs forziuenes of oure outrage trespas and offence. [3015] For wel 3e knowen þat 3oure liberal grace and mercy strechen forþere in to goodnesse þan doþ oure outrage gilt and trespas in to wikkednes [3016] al be it þat cursedly & dampnably we ¹haue agilt azeinst 3oure highe lordschipe

[3017] ¶ Thanne Melibe took hem vp fro þe ground ful benignely [3018] and resceyued here obligaciouns and here londes by here oþes vpon here plegges & borwes [3019] and assigned hem a certeyn day to retourne vnto his court [3020] for to accepte and reseyue þe sentence and

iuggement þat Melibe wolde comaunde to be doon on hem by þese causes aforn sayde. [3021] which þing ordeyned: euery man retourned home to his hous

[3022] ¶ And whan þat Dame prudence saugh hire tyme: sche feyned and axed hire lord Melibe [3023] what vengeance he þoughte to take vpon his aduersaries.

[3024] to which Melibeus answerd and saide. Certes quod he I þenke and purpose me fully [3025] to disherite hem of al þat euer þay haue and for to putte hem in exil for euermore

[3026] Certes quod dame prudence þis were a cruel sentence and mochil azeinst resoun [3027] For 3e ben riche ynough & haue noon neede of oþer mennes good [3028] and 3e mighte lightly gete 3ow a coueitous name [3029] which is vicious þing and oughte to ben eschewed of euery man [3030] for after þe sawe of þe word of þapostil: Couetise is roote of alle harmes. [3031] And þerfore it were bettre for 3ow to lese so moche good of 3oure oughne þan for to take of here good in þis manere. [3032] For bettir it is to lese good wiþ worschipe þan it is to wynne good with vilonye and schame. [3033] and euer a man oughte to do his diligence and his busynesse to gete him a good name. [3034] [. no gap] [3035] but he schulde enforce him alway to do som þing by which he may renouele his good name. [3036] for it is writen þat þe olde goode loos of a man is soone doon or goon and passed whan it is not newed ne renoueled. [3037] And as touchinge þat 3e sayn þat 3e wol exile 3oure aduersaries: [3038] þat þinketh me mochil azeinst resoun and out of mesure [3039] consideriþ þe power þat þay han 3yue to 3ow vpon here body and on himself [3040] ¶ And it is writen þat he is worþy to lese his priuelege þat mys vseth þe might and þe power þat is 3eue to him [3041] ¶ And 3it I sette þe caas 3e mighte enioyne hem þat peyne by right and lawe [3042] which I

trowe 3e mow nouȝt^t do [3043] I say 3e mighte nouȝt^t
 putte it to execucioun *peraventure* [3044] and þanne
 were it likly to torne to þe werre as it^t was biforn
 [3045] And þerfore if^t 3e wol þat men do 3ow obeis-
 saunce: 3e moste deme more curteisly [3046] þis is to
 sayn. 3e moste ȝiue more esyere sentence & iuggement^t
 [3047] ¶ For ¹it is writen. he þat^t most^t curteisly
 comaundeth to him men most^t obeyen. [3048] and þer-
 fore I pray 3ow þat^t in þis necessite and in þis neede
 3e caste 3ow to ouercome 3oure herte [3049] ¶ For Senek^t
 saith. he þat^t ouercomeþ his herte ouercomeþ
 twyes [3050] ¶ And thullius saith. þer is no þing^t so
 comendable in a gret^t lord [3051] as whan he is debon-
 aire and meeke and appesith him listly [3052] ¶ And I pray
 3ow þat^t 3e wol forbere now to do vengeance [3053] in
 such a manere þat^t 3oure goode name may be kept/ &
 conserued. [3054] and þat^t men mowe haue cause / and
 matiere to prayse 3ow of^t pite and of^t mercy [3055] and
 þat 3e haue noon cause to repente 3ow of^t þing^t þat 3e doon
 [3056] ¶ For senec saith ¶ he ouercomeþ in an euel
 manere þat^t repenteth him of^t his victorie [3057] ¶ wher-
 fore I pray 3ow let^t mercy be in
 3oure herte [3058] to theffect and thentent þat^t god
 almighty haue mercy and pite vpon 3ow in his laste iuggement
 [3059] ¶ For seint^t Iame saith in his Epistil: Iuggement wiþ
 oute mercy schal be doon to him þat^t haþ no mercy vpon
 another wight^t

[3060] whan Melibe had herd þe grete skiles
 and resouns of^t dame prudens and wys informacioun
 and techynge: [3061] his herte gan encline to þe wille of^t
 his wyf^t consideryng^t hir trewe entent: [3062] cō-
 firmed him anon and consented fully to werke after hir
 reed and counseil [3063] ¶ And þankid god of^t whom pro-
 cedeth al goodnes þat^t him sente a wif^t of^t so gret
 discrecioun [3064] ¶ And whan þe day cam þat^t his aduer-
 saries schulden appere in his presence: [3065] he spak^t

ful goodly and sayde in þis wise. [3066] ¶ Al be
 it so þat of ȝoure pryde and heigh presumeioun and folye
 and of ȝoure negligence/ and vnconnyng [3067] ȝe haue
 mys-bore ȝow and trespassed vnto me: [3068] ȝit/ for as
 moche as I se and biholde ȝoure humilite
 [3069] þat ȝe ben sory and repentaunt of ȝoure giltes:
 [3070] hit constreigneth me to do ȝow grace. and mercy.
 [3071] wherfore I receyue ȝow to my grace [3072] and
 forȝeue ȝow outerly alle þe offenses iniuries and wronges
 þat ȝe haue don to me and agayns me and myne / [3073] this
 is þeffect & to þis ende þat god of his endeles mercy
 [3074] wole at þe tyme of oure deyinge forȝiue vs oure
 giltes þat we haue trespassed to him in þis wrecched
 world. [3075] for douteles & we ben sory & repentaunt
 of þe synnes & giltes whiche we haue trespassed Inne in þe
 sight of oure lord god: [3076] he is so free and ¹so merci-
 able [3077] þat he wil forȝiue vs oure gultes [3078]
 and bringe vs to þe blisse þat neuer hap ende AmeN
 ¶ Here endith Chaucer his tale of Melibe

[leaf 226]

¶ And here bygynneþ þe prologe of þe monkes tale /
 [Break of one line in the MS.]

Whan ended was my tale of Melibe 3079
 And of prudence and hire benignite
 Oure hoste sayde as I am faithful man
 And by þe precious corpus Madryan
 I hadde leuer þan a barel ale
 That godeleef my wyf had herd þis tale 3084
 For sche is no þing of such pacience
 As was þis melibeus wyf dame prudence
 By goddes boones whan I bete my knaues
 Sche bringeth me forth þe grete clobbet staues 3088
 And criep slee þe dogges euerychon
 And breke of hem boþe bak and bon
 And if þat eny neghebour of myne
 wol nought to my wyf in chirche enclyne 3092
 Or be so hardy to hir to trespace
 whan sche comþ hom sche rampeth in my face
 And criep false coward wreke þy wyf
 By Corpes bones I wil haue þy knyf 3096
 And þou schalt haue my distaf and go spyne
 Fro day to night þus sche wil bygynne /
 Allas sche saith þat euer I was I-schape
 To wedde a mylk-sop or a coward ape 3100
 That wil be ouer-lad wip euery wight
 þou darst nought stonde by þy wyues right
 This is my lif but if þat I wil fight
 And out atte dore anon I most me dight / 3104
 And ellis I am lost / but if þat I
 Be lik a wilde leoun fool-hardy
 I wot wel sche wol do me sle som day
 Som neighebor and þanne renne away 3108
 For I am perilous with knyf in honde
 Al be it þat I dar not hir wip-stonde

For sche is big^t in armes by my faith 3111
 That^t schal he fynde þat hire mys doth or saith [leaf 226, back]
 But^t let^t vs passe a way fro þis matiere
 My lord þe monk^t quod he be mery of^t chere /
 For 3e schul telle a tale trewely
 Lo Rowchestre stant^t heer faste by 3116
 Ryde forþ myn oughne lord brek^t nouȝt^t oure game
 But^t by my troupe I can not^t ȝoure name
 whether schal I calle ȝow my lord dan Ioħn
 Or daūn Thomas or elles dan albon 3120
 Of^t what^t hous be 3e by ȝour fader kyn
 I vow to god þou hast^t a ful fair skyn
 It^t is a gentil pasture þer þou gost^t
 Thow art^t not^t lik^t a penaunt^t or a goost^t 3124
 vpon my faith þou art^t an officer
 Som worþy sexteyn or som Celerer
 For by my fader soule as to my doome
 Thou art^t an officer whan þou art^t at hoom 3128
 No pouer cloysterer ne non nouys
 But^t a gouernour wily and wys
 And þer wiþ al of^t brawne and of^t bones
 A wel faryng^t persone for þe noones 3132
 I praye god ȝiue him confusioun
 þat first/ þe brouȝte to religioun
 Thow woldist^t han be a tredefoul aright^t
 haddist^t þou as gret^t a leue as might^t 3136
 To parforme al þi wil in engendrure
 Thow haddist^t bigeten many a creature
 Allas why werest^t þou so wyd a cope
 God ȝif^t me sorwe and I were a pope 3140
 Nough^t only þou but^t euery mighty man
 Though he were schore brode vpon his pan
 Schuld han a wif^t for al þis world is lorn
 Religioun hath take vp al þe corn 3144
 Of^t tredyng^t and we burel men ben schrympes
 Of^t feble trees þer comeþ feble ympes

This makip þat' oure heires ben so sclender
 And feble þat' þay may not' wel engender 3148
 This makeþ þat' our wyfes wol assaye
 Religious folk' for þay may bettre paye [leaf 227]
 Of' venus payementes þan may we
 God woot' no lusscheburghies paye 3e / 3152
 beþ nouȝt' wroþ my lorde þough I play
 For oft' in game a soth I haue herd say
 This worþy monk' took' al in pacience /
 And saide I wol doon al my diligence 3156
 Als fer as sounep in to honeste /
 To telle ȝow a tale or tuo or þre
 And if' ȝow lust' to herken hiderward
 I wil ȝow say þe lif' of' seint' Edward 3160
 Or elles first' tredis wil I ȝow telle /
 Of' which I haue an hundred in my celle /
 Tregedis is to sayn a certeyn storie
 As olde bookes maken vs memorie 3164
 Of' hem þat' stood in greet' prosperite
 And is fallen out' of' heigh degre
 In to miserie and endith wrecchedly
 And þay ben versifyed comunly 3168
 Of' six feet' which men clepe exametron
 In prose ben eek' endited many oon
 And in metre eek' and in sondry wise
 Lo þis declaryng' ought' ynough suffise / 3172
 Now herkneþ if ȝow likith for to heere
 But' first' I ȝow biseche in þis matiere /
 þough I by ordre telle not' þise þinges
 Be it' of' popes emperours or kynges 3176
 After her age as men may write fynde
 But' telle hem som bifore. and som byhynde /
 As it comeþ now / to my remembraunce
 haueþ me excused of' myn ignoraunce 3180

[Break of one line in the MS.]

I wol bywaile in maner of tregedye
The harm of hem þat stood in heigh degre
And fallen so þe is no remedye
To bring hem out of her aduersite 3184
For certeynly whan fortune lust to flee
Ther may no man þe cours of hir whiel holde
let no man truste in blynd prosperite [leaf 227, back]
Beþ war by þese ensamples trewe and olde / 3188
[No stanza-breaks in the MS.]

[Lucifer.]

AT lucifer þough he an aungil were ¶ Lucifer
And no man at him wil I bygynne
For þough fortune may non aungel dere
From heigh degre ȝit fel he for his synne 3192
Doun in to helle. wher he ȝet is Inne
O lucifer brightest of aungels alle
Now art þou Sathanas þat maist nouȝt twynne
Out of miserie in which þou art falle 3196

[Adam.]

Lo adam in þe feld of Damassene ¶ Adam
wip goddes oughne fynger wrought was he /
And nought bigeten of mannes sperma vnclene
And welt al paradys sauynge oon tre 3200
had neuer worldly man suche degre
As adam til he for mys gouernance
was dryuen out of heigh prosperite
To labour and to helle and to meschaunce 3204

[*Sampson.*]

Lo Sampson. þat^t was annunciate ¶ Sampson
 By þangel long^t er his natiuite /
 And was to god almighty consecrate
 And stood in nobles whil þat^t he might se 3208
 was neuer such anoþer as was he
 To speke of^t strengþ. and þerto hardynesse
 But^t to his wyfes tolde he his secre
 Thurgħ which he slough^t himself^t for wrecchidnesse / 3212

[.

 3216

 no gap in the MS.] 3220

Thre hundred foxis. tok^t Sampson for Ire
 And alle her tayles he togider bond
 And sette þe foxes tailles alle on fuyre
 For he in euery tail hath knyht a brond 3224
 And þay brent^t alle þe cornes of^t þat lond
 And alle her Olyuers. and vynes eeke
 A þousand men he slough^t eek^t wip his hond
 And hadde no wepen but an asses cheeke 3228

Whan þay were slayn so þursted him þat he
 was wel ner lorn for which he gan to preye
 That^t god wolde of^t his peyne haue som pite
 And send him drynk^t and elles most he deye 3232
 And out^t of^t his asses cheke þat^t was so dreye [leaf 228]
 Out^t of^t a woung^t toþ sprong^t anon a welle
 Of^t which he dronk^t ynough^t schortly to seye
 Thus halp him god as Iudicum can telle 3236

By verray fors of algason on a night
 Maugre þe philistiens of þat cite
 The gates of þe toun he haþ vp plight/
 And on his bak caried hem haþ he / 3240
 heigh vpon an hil wher men might hem se /
 O noble almighty Sampson leef and deere
 haddest þou nought to wommen told þy secre
 In al þe world ne hadde be þy peere 3244

This sampson neyther siser dronk ne wyn /
 Ne on his heed com rasour noon ne schere
 By precept of þe messenger diuyn
 For alle his strengþes in his heres were 3248
 And fully twenty wynter 3er by 3ere/
 he hadde of Ierusalem þe gouernaunce
 But soone he schal wepe many a teere
 For wymmen schuln him bringe to meschaunce 3252

Vn-to his lemman Dalida he tolde
 That in his heres al his strengþe lay
 And falsly to his foomen sche him solde
 And slepyng in hir barm vpon a day 3256
 Sche made to clippe or schere his heres away
 And made his foomen al his craft espien
 And whan þay fond him in þis array
 Thay bound him fast and put out boþe his yen 3260

But er his heer clipped was or I-schaue
 Ther was no bond wiþ which men might him bynde
 But now is he in prisoun in a caue
 Ther as þay made him at þe querne grynde 3264
 O noble Sampson strengest of al man kynde
 O whilom iugge in glory and in richesse /
 Now maystow wepe wiþ þine eyzen blynde
 Sith þou fro wele art falle to wrecchednesse 3268

Thend of þis caytif was as I schal say
 his foomen made a fest vpon a day
 And made him as here fool biforn hem play [leaf 228, back]
 And þis was in a temple of gret array 3272
 But/ atte last he made a foul affray
 For he two pilers schookt and made hem falle
 And doun fel temple and al and þer it lay
 And slough himsilft and eek his fomen alle 3276

This is to sayn þe princes euer ichon
 And eek þe þousand bodies were þer slayn
 with fallyng of þe grete temple of stoon
 Of Sampson wil I no more sayn 3280
 Be war by þese ensamples olde and playn
 That no man telle his counseil to his wyf
 Of such þing as he wold haue secre fayn
 If/ þat/ it touche his lymes or his lif 3284

[Hercules.]

Of Ercules þe souereyn conquerour ¶ De Ercule
 Singing his werkes laude and heigh renoun
 For in his tyme of strength he bar þe flour
 he slough and rafte þe skyn fro þe leoun 3288
 he of Centaures layde þe bost a doun
 he arpies slough þe cruel briddes felle
 The gold appul he raft fro þe dragoun
 he drof out cerbures þe fend of helle 3292

He slough þe cruel tyrant bupherus
 And made his hors to frete him fleisch and boon
 he slough þe verray serpent venencus
 Of Adiloyus tuo hornes he raft oon 3296
 he slough Catus in a caue of stoon
 he slough þe geaunt adeus þe stronge
 he slough þe grisly leoun and þat anoon
 And bar þe heed vpon his necke longe 3300

Was neuer wight / sippen þe world bigan
 That slough so many monstres as dede he
 Thurgh-out þe wide world his name ran
 what for his strengþe and for his bounte 3304
 And euery roialme went he for to se
 he was so strongt þer might no man him lette
 At þoþe þe worldes endes as saith trophe
 In stede of boundes he a piler sette 3308

A lemman hadde þis noble campioun [leaf 229]
 That highite Deianire freisshe as may
 And as þese clerkes maken mencion
 Sche haþ him sent a schurte fresch and gay 3312
 Alas þis schirt allas and wailaway
 Enuenymed was soply with alle
 That er he hadde wered it half a day
 It made his fleisch al fro his bones falle / 3316

But natheles som clerkes hir excusen
 By oon þat highite Nessus þat it makyd
 Be as be may I wil nouȝt hir accusyn
 But on his bak / he wered þis schirt al naked 3320
 Til þat his fleisch was for þe venym blaked
 And whan he saugh noon oþer remedye
 In hote colis he haþ himself I-raked
 For no venym deynd him to dye 3324

Thus starf þis mighty and worthy Ercules
 lo who may truste fortune eny þrowe
 For him þat folweþ al þis world of þres
 Er he be war is oft y-layd ful lowe / 3328
 Ful wys is he þat / can himseluen knowe /
 Be war for whan þat fortune lust to glose /
 Than waytith sche hir man to ouerþrowe /
 By suche way as he wolde lest suppose 3332

[*Nebuchadnezzar.*]

The mighty trone þe precious tresor ¶ De rege
 The glorious ceptre and real mageste Nabugodonosor
 That had þe king Nabugodonosore
 wiþ tonge vnnethes may descryued be 3336
 he twyes wan ierusalem þat Cite
 The vessel out of þe temple he wiþ him ladde / ¶ Danielis 4^{to}
 At Babiloyne was his souereyn see regum &c
 In which his glorie and his delyt he ladde / 3340

The fairest children of þe blood roial
 Of Israel he dede gelde anoon
 And made ylk of hem to ben his þral
 Amonges opre Daniel was oon 3314
 That was þe wisest / child of euerychoon
 For he þe dremes of þe king expounded
 Ther as in Caldeyn was þer clerkes noon [*leaf 229, back*]
 That wiste to what fyn his dremes souned 3348

This proude king let make a statu of gold
 Sixty cubites long and seuen in brede
 To which ymage boþe 3onge and olde /
 Comaunded he to loue and haue in drede 3352
 Or in a fornays ful of flames rede
 he schulde be brent þat wolde not obeye /
 But neuer wolde assente to þat dede
 Danyel ne his felawes tweye 3356

This king of kinges preu was elate
 he wende god þat sit in mageste
 Ne might him nought / bireue of his estate
 But sodeynly he left / his dignite 3360
 I-lik a best him semed for to be
 And eet hay as an ox and lay þer-out /
 In rayn with wilde bestes walkyd he.
 [til certein tyme was i-come aboute¹] [*In margin, in a later hand.*]

And lik/ an Eglis fetheres were his heres
 his hondes like a briddes clowes were
 Til god relessed him a certeyn 3eres
 And 3aft him witte and þanne with many a tere 3368
 he þanked god and euer he is afere
 To doon amys or more to trespace
 And er þat tyme he layd was on bere
 he knew wel god was ful of might and grace 3372

His sone which þat highte Balthazar
 That huld þe regne after his fader day
 he by his fader couþe nought be war
 For proud he was of hert/ and of array 3376
 And eek an ydolaster was he ay
 his heigh astate assured him in pryde
 But fortune cast him down and þer he lay
 And sodeynly his regne gan diuide 3380

A fest he made vnto his lordes alle
 vpon a tyme he made hem bliþe be
 And þan his officeres gan he calle
 Gop bringeth forth þe vessealx quod he 3384
 The which my fader in his prosperite
 Out of þe temple of ierusalem byraft [leaf 230]
 And to oure hihe goddis þanke we/
 Of honours þat oure eldres with vs laft 3388

His wif his lordes and his concubines
 Ay dronken whiles her arriont last
 Out of þis noble vesseals sondry wynes
 And on a wal þis king his yhen cast / 3392
 And saugh an hond armles þat wroot fast /
 For fere of which he quook and siked sore
 þis hond þat balthazar so sore agast
 wrot. mane. techel. phares. and no more / 3396

In al þe lond magicien was noon
 That coupe expounde what þis lettre ment
 But Daniel expoundiþ it anoon
 And sayde king god þy fader sent 3400
 Glori and honour. regne tresor and rent
 And he was proud and no þing god ne dredde
 And þerfor god gret wreche vpon him sent
 And him biraft þe regne þat he hadde / 3404

He was out cast of mannes compaignye
 with asses was his habitacioun
 And eete hay in wet and eek in drye
 Til þat he knew by grace and by resoun 3408
 That god of heuen had dominacioun
 Ouer euery regne and euery creature
 And þan had god of him compassioun
 And him restored to his regne and his figure 3412

Eke þou þat art his sone art proud also
 And knowest al þis þing so verrayly
 And art rebel to god and art his fo
 þou dronk eek of his vessel bodily 3416
 Thy wyf eek and þy wenche sinfully
 Dronke of þe same vessel sondry wynes
 And heriest false goddes cursedly
 Therefore to þe schapen ful gret pyne es 3420

This hond was send fro god þat on þe wal
 wrot. mane. techel. phares truste me
 Thy regne is doon þou weist nouȝt at al
 Diuidid is þy regne and it schal be [leaf 230, back] 3424
 To meedes and to perses ȝeuen quod he
 And þilke same night þe king was slawe
 And Darius occupied his degre
 þough þerto neyþer had he right ne lawe / 3428

Lordyngs ensample her-by may 3e take
 how þat^t in lordschip is no sikernesse
 For whan fortune wil a man forsake
 Sche bereþ a-way his regne and his richesse / 3432
 And eek^t his frendes boþe more and lesse /
 And what^t man hath of^t frendes þe fortune
 Mishap wil make hem enemyes I gesse
 [þis prouerbe is ful soth & ful comune¹]

[¹ In a later hand
in the margin.]

[No break in the MS.]

Cenobia of^t palmire þe queene
 As writen parciens of^t hir noblesse
 So worþy was in armes and so keene
 That^t no wight^t passed hir in hardynesse 3440
 Ne in lynage ne in oþer gentilesse /
 Of þe kinges blood / of^t pers sche is descendid
 I say þat^t sche had not most^t fairnesse
 But^t of^t hir schap sche might^t not^t ben amendid 3444

Fro hir childhod / I fynde þat^t sche fledde
 Office of^t wommen and to woode sche went
 And many a wilde hertes blood sche schedde
 with arwes brode þat^t sche to hem sent / 3448
 Sche was so swyft^t þat^t sche anon hem hent
 And whan þat^t sche was elder sche wolde kille
 Leouns / lebardes / and beres alto-rent
 And in hir armes weld hem at hir wille 3452

Sche dorste wilde bestes dennes seke/
 And renne in þe mounteyns al þe night^t
 And slepe vnder a bussþ and sche coupe eeke
 wrastil by verray fors and verray might 3456
 wiþ eny 3ong^t man were he neuer so wight^t
 Ther mighte no þing^t in hir armes stonde
 She kept^t hir maydenhed from euery wight^t
 To no man deyned hire to be bonde 3460

Butt atte last hir frendes han hir maried
 To Odenake a prince of þat Citee
 Al were it so þat sche him longe taried [leaf 231]
 And ȝe schul vnderstonde how þat he 3464
 had suche fantasies as hadde sche /
 Butt naþeles whan þay were knygt in fere
 Thay lyued in ioye and in felicite
 For ech of hem had oþer leef and deere 3468

Saue oon þingt sche wolde neuer assent
 By no way þat he schulde by hir lye
 Butt oones for it was hir playn entent
 To haue a child þe world to multiplie 3472
 And also soone as she mightt aspye /
 Thatt sche was nott wip childe ȝit in dede /
 Than wold sche suffre him doon his fantasie
 Eftt sones and noughtt butt oones outt of drede / 3476

And ift sche were wip child att pilke cast
 No more schuld he playe pilke game
 Til fully fourty dayes were y-pastt
 Than wold sche suffre him to do þe same 3480
 Al were þis Odenake wilde or tame
 he gat no more of hir for þus sche sayde
 hit nas butt wyues lecchery and schame /
 In oþer caas ift þat/ men with hem playde / 3484

Tuo sones by þis Odenak had sche
 The which sche kept in vertu and lettrure
 Butt now vnto our purpos torne we
 I say so worschipful a creature 3488
 And wys. worþy. and large with mesure
 So penyble in þe werre and curteys eeke
 Ne more labour mightt in werre endure /
 was no wher noon in al þis world to seeke 3492

Hir riche array if it might be told
 As wel in vessel as in hir cloping
 Sche was al cloped in perre and gold
 And eek sche lafte nought for hir huntyng 3496
 To haue of sondry tonges ful knowing
 whan sche had leyser // and might *perto* entent
 To lerne bookes was al hir likyng
 How sche in vertu might hir lif despent 3500

And schortly of pis story for to trete [leaf 231, back]
 So doughty was hir housbond and eek sche
 That pay conquered many regnes grete
 In thorient with many a fair citee 3504
 Appurtienant vnto that mageste /
 Of Rome. and with strong hond hulden hem fast
 Ne neuer might her fomen doon hem fle
 Ay while Odenakes dayes last / 3508

Her batails who / so lust hem for to rede
 Agayn Sapor þe king and oþer mo
 And how þat pis processe fel in dede
 why sche conquered and what title had *perto* 3512
 And after of hir meschief and hir woo /
 how þat sche was deceyued and I-take /
 let hem vnto my mayster perark go
 That writeth of pis ynough I vndertake / 3516

Whan Odenake was deed sche mightily
 The regnes huld and wiþ hir propre hond
 Azeins hir foos sche faught ful trewely
 That þer nas king ne prince in þat lond 3520
 That he nas glad if he þat grace fond
 That sche ne wold vpon his lond werraye
 with hir pay made alliaunce by bond
 To ben in pees and let hir ryde and play 3524

The emperour of Rome Claudius
 Ne him biforn þe romayn· Galiene
 Ne dorste neuer be so corrageous
 Ne noon ermine ne Egipcienne 3528
 No Surrien ne noon arrabiene
 wipinne þe feld þat durste with hir fight
 Lest' þat' sche wold hem wip her hondes sleen
 Or wip hir meyne putten hem to flight 3532

In kinges abytt went hir sones tuo
 As heires of her fadres regnes alle
 And hermanno and Themaleo
 here names were and Parciens men hem calle / 3536
 But' ay fortune hath in hir hony galle
 This mighty queene may no while endure
 Fortune out' of hir regne made hir falle [leaf 232]
 To wrecchednesse and to mys aduenture 3540

Aurilian whan þat' þe gouernaunce
 Of Rome cam in-to his hondes tway /
 he schop him of þis queen to do vengeance /
 And with his legiouns he took' þe way 3544
 Toward Cenoby and schortly to say
 he made hir flee and atte last' hir hent
 And feterid hir and eek' hir children tweye
 And wan þe lond and home to Rome he went 3548

Amonges oþer þinges þat he wan
 hir chaar þat' was wip gold wrouȝt' and perre
 This grete Romayn þis aurilian
 hath with him lad for þat' men schulde se 3552
 Bifore þis triumphe walkith sche /
 And gilte cheynes in hir necke hongynge
 Coroun sche was as aftir hir degre
 [and ful of perre chargid here clothynge¹]

[¹ In a later hand
 in the margin.]

Allas fortune . sche that whilom was
 Dredful to kinges and to Emperoures
 Now gaulith al þe pepul on hir alas
 And sche þat helmyd was in starke stoures / 3560
 And wan bifore tounes stronge and toures
 Schal on heed now were a wyntermyte
 And sche þat bar þe cepter ful of floures
 Schal bere a distaf hir self for to quyte 3564

[No break in the MS.]

O noble petro . þe glori of Spayne / ¶ De petro his-
 whom fortune held so heigh in mageste pannie rege
 wel oughte men þy pitous deþ complayne
 Thy bastard broþer made þe to fle 3568
 And after / at a sege by subtilte
 þow were bytrayed and lad to his tent
 wher / as he with his oughne hond slough þe
 Succedyng in þy lond and in þy rent 3572

The feld of snow with thegle of blak per-Inne
 Caught wip þe leoun reed coloured as is þe gleede
 he brewede þe cursednesse and synne
 The wikked nest werker of þis neede 3576
 Nought Oliuer ne Charles þat ay took heede
 Of trouthe and honour but / of armoryk' [leaf 232, back]
 Geniloun oliuer corruptid for nede
 Broughte þis worþy king in such a bryk' 3580

[No break in the MS.]

O worþy petro king of Cipres also ¶ De petro Cypre rege
 That alisaunder wan by heigh maistrye /
 Ful many an hethen wroughtest þou ful wo
 Of which þin oughne lieges had enuye 3584
 And for no þing but for þy chialrie
 pay in thy bed han slayn þe by þe morwe
 Thus can fortune þe whel gouerne and gye
 And out of ioie bringe men in to sorwe 3588

[No break in the MS.]

Of Melayn grete Barnabo viscount ¶ De Barnabo Co-
 God of delyt and strength of lumbardy mite Mediolano
 why schuld þyn infortune I noughȝt accounte

Syn in astaat þou clombe were so hye 3592

Thy broþer sone þat was þy double allie

For he þy neuwe was and sone in lawe

wipinne his prisoun made þe to dye

But why ne how not I þat þou were slawe / 3596

[No break in the MS.]

Of erl hugilin of pise þe langour ¶ De hugilino
 Ther may no tonge telle þe pite Comite Pise

But litel out of pise stant a tour

In whiche tour / in prisoun put was he / 3600

And with him been his litil children þre

Theldest skarsly fyf þer was of age /

Allas fortune it was gret cruelte

Suche briddes to put in such a cage 3604

Dampnyd he was to deye in þat prisoun

For Roger which þat bisshop was of pise

Had on him maad a fals suggestioun

Thurgh which þe peple gan on him arise 3608

And putte him in prisoun in such wise

As þe han herd and mete and drynk he hadde

So smal þat wel vnneþe it may suffise

And þer wip al it was ful pore and badde 3612

And on a day bifel þat in þat hour

whan þat his mete was wont to be brought

The gayler schet þe dores of þat tour

He herd it wel but he saugh it noughȝt [leaf 233] 3616

And in his hert anon þer fel a þoughȝt

þat þay for hungir wolde doon him dyen

Alas quod he allas þat I was wroughȝt

Ther-wip þe teeres felle fro his eyen 3620

His 3ongest^t sone þat^t þre 3er was of^t age
 Vnto him sayde fader why do ye wepe
 whan wil þe gayler bringen oure potage
 Is þer no morsel bred þat^t 3e doon kepe 3624
 I am so hongry þat^t I may not sleepe
 Now wolde god þat^t I might slepe euer
 Than schuld not^t hunger in my wombe crepe
 Ther is no ping^t saue bred þat^t me were leuer 3628

Thus day by day þis child bigan to crie
 Til in his fadres barm a-doun he lay
 And sayde far wel fader I moot^t dye
 And kist^t his fader and dyde þe same day 3632
 And whan þe woful fader deed it say.
 For wo his armes tuo he gan to byte
 And sayde fortune alas and waylaway
 Thin false querel al my woo I wyte 3636

His childer wende þat^t it^t for hongir was
 That^t he his armes gnaw and nought^t for wo
 And sayden fader do nought^t so allas
 But^t rather et^t þe fleisch vpon vs tuo 3640
 Oure fleisch þou 3aue vs / oure fleisch þou take vs fro
 And ete ynough right^t þus þay to him seyde
 And after þat^t wipinne a day or tuo
 Thay layde hem in his lappe a-doun and deyde 3644

Himself^t despeired eek^t for honger starf^t
 Thus ended is þis mighty eorl of^t pise
 For his estate fortune fro him carf^t
 Of^t þis tegrede it^t ought^t ynough suffise / 3648
 who-so wil it hiere in lenger wise
 Rede þe gret^t poet^t of^t Itaile
 That^t highte Daunt^t for he can it deuise
 Fro poynt to poynt nouȝt^t oon word wil he fayle 3652

[No break in the MS.]

Al þough Nero were als vicious ¶ De Nerone
 As any fend that lith ful lowe adoun [leaf 233, back]
 3it as tellith vs Swethoneus
 This wyde world had in subieccioun 3656
 Boþe Est and west and Septemtrioun
 Of rubies. safers. and of perles white
 were alle his cloþes embroudid vp and down
 For he in gemmis / gretly gan delite 3660

More delyt. more pomp of array
 Mor proud was neuer Emperour þan he
 That ylke cloth þat he had wered a day
 After þat tyme he nolde it neuer se 3664
 Nettis of gold þred. had he gret plente
 To fische in tyber whan him lust to pleye
 his willes were as lawe in his degre
 For fortune as his frend wold him obeye 3668

He Rome brent for his delicacie
 The senatours he slough vpon a day
 To here how men wolde wepe and crye
 And slough his broþer. and by his suster lay 3672
 his modir made he in pitous array
 For hir wombe slyt he to byholde
 wher he conceyued so waylaway /
 þat he so litel of his moodir tolde 3676

No teer out of his eyen for þat sight/
 Ne cam but sayde a fair womman was sche
 Gret wonder is þat he couþe or might
 Be domesman on hir beaute 3680
 The wyn to bringen him comaundid he
 And drank anoon noon oþer wo he made
 whan might is torned vnto cruelte
 Allas to deepe wil þe venym wade / 3684

IN ȝouȝe a maister had ȝis emperour
 To teche him letterure and curtesye
 For of moralite he was ȝe flour
 And in his tyme but if ȝe book' lye 3688
 And whil his maister had of him maistrie
 he made him so connyng' and so souple /
 That' long' tyme it was or tyrranye
 Or ony vice dorst' on him vncouple / [leaf 234] 3692

This Seneca of' which ȝat' I deuyse ¶ Seneca
 By cause Nero had of him such drede
 For fro vices he wolde him chastise
 Discretly by word and nouȝt' by dede / 3696
 Sir wold he sayn an emperour mot neede /
 Be vertuous and hate tyrannye
 For which he in a bath made him to bleede
 On boȝe his armes til he moste dye 3700

The nero hadde eek' a custumance /
 No ȝouȝe aȝein his maister for to ryse /
 which afterward him þought' a gret greuauunce
 Therefore he made him deye in ȝis wise 3704
 But' napeles ȝis Seneca ȝe wise
 Ches in bath to deye in ȝis manere /
 Raper ȝan to haue anoȝer tyrannye
 And ȝus hap Nero slayn his maister deere / 3708

Now fel it so ȝat' fortune lust' no lenger
 The highe pride of Nero to cherice
 For pough he were strong' ȝit' was sche strengere
 Sche þoughte ȝus by god I am to nyce 3712
 To set' a man ȝat' is ful sad of' vice
 In high degre and emperour him calle /
 By god out' of' his cite I wil him trice
 whan he lest' wenep' sonnest' schal byfalle 3716

The poeple ros on him vpon a night
 For heigh defaute and whan he it aspyed
 Out' of his dores anoon he hap him dight
 Aloone and þer he wende haue ben allyed 3720
 he knocked fast' and ay þe more he cried
 The faster schette þay þe doores alle/
 Than wist' he wel he had himself' mysgyed
 And went' his way no lenger durst' he calle 3724

The peple cried and rumbled vp and doun
 That' with his eris herd he how þay sayde
 Wher is þis fals traitour þis neroun
 For fere almost' out' of his witte he brayde / 3728
 And to his goddes pitously he prayde /
 For socour but' it mighte nought betyde / [leaf 234, back]
 For drede of þis him þoughte þat he dyde
 And ran in to a gardyn hym to hyde 373

And in þis gardyn fond he cherlis twaye
 Sittyng' by a fuyr ful greet and reed
 And to þese che[r]les tuo he gan to pray
 To sleen him and to girden of' his heed * 3736
 That' to his body whan he were deed
 were despyt' y-doon for his defame
 himself' he slough he coupe no better reed
 Of which fortune þai lough and hadde game / 3740
 [No break in the MS.]

Was neuer Capitaigne vnder a king' / ¶ De Olipherno
 Thas regnes mo put in subieccioun
 Ne strenger was in feld of' alle þing'
 As in his tyme ne gretter of' renoun 3744
 Ne more pompous in heih presumpcioun
 Than Oliphern. which þat fortune ay kist'
 So licorously. and ladde him vp and doun
 Til that' his heed was of' er he it wist' 3748

Nought oonly þat þe world had of him awe /
 For lesyngt of riches and liberte
 But made euery man reneye his lawe /
 Nabugodonosor was lord sayde he / 3752
 Noon oþer god schuld honoured be
 Azeinst his heste dar no wightt trespac ¶ Et fecerunt filij
 Saue in Betholia a strond cite israel secundum
 wher Eliachim a prest of þat place quod constituit eis
 dominus sacerdos
 Elyachym

But tak keep of þat day of Olipherne
 Amyd his ost/ he dronke lay on night
 wipinne his tente large as is a berne
 And 3it for al his pomp and al his mightt 3760
 Iudith a womman as he lay vpright
 Slepynge his heed of smot and fro his tent
 Ful priuely sche stal from euery wight
 And with his heed vnto hir toun sche went 3764
 [No break in the MS.]

What needith it of kingt antiochius ¶ De Rege Anti-
 To telle his heye real mageste / ochie illustri.
 his heyhe pride his werke venemous
 For such anoþer was þer noon as he [leaf 235] 3768
 Redep which þat he was in machabe
 And redith þe proude wordes þat he sayde
 And why he fel fro his prosperite
 And in an hil. how wrecchidly he deyde 3772

Fortune him hap enhaunced so in pryde
 That verrailly he wend he mightt han teyned
 Vnto þe sterris vpon euery syde /
 And in a balaunce weyen what ech mounteyned 3776
 And alle þe floodes of þe see restreyne
 And goddes peple had he most in hate
 hem wold he slee in torment and in peyne
 wenyngt þat god ne mightt his pride abate 3780

And for þat Nichosor and Thimothe /
 with Iewes were venquist/ mightily
 Vn to þe Iewes such an hate had he /
 That he bad graithe his chaar hastily 3784
 And swor and sayde ful despitously
 Vnto Ierusalem he wold eft soone
 To wreke his Ire on it ful cruelly
 But of his purpos he was let ful soone 3788

God for his manace him so sore smoot
 wiþ inuisible wounde. incurable
 That in his guttes carf so and bot
 That his peynes were importable 3792
 And certeynly þe wreche was resonable
 For on many a man. dede he peyne
 But fro his purpos cursed and dampnable /
 For al his smert he nolde him nought restreyne / 3796

But bad anon apparailen his host
 And sodeynly er he was of it ware
 God dampned al his pride and al his bost
 For he so sore fel out of his chare 3800
 That his lymes and his skyn to-tare /
 So þat he no more might go ne ryde /
 But in a chare men aboute him bare /
 Al forbrosed boþe bak and syde / 3804

The wreche of god him smot so cruelly
 That in his body wicked wormes crept [leaf 235, back]
 And þer with al he stonk/ so orribly
 That noon of his meyne þat him kep[t]e 3808
 wheþer þat he wook or elles slepte
 Ne mighte nought þe stynek of him endure
 In þis meschief he weyled and eek wepte /
 And knew god lord of euery creature 3812

To al his host^t and to himself^t also
 Ful wlatson was þe styнк^t and þe carayne
 No man might^t him bere to ne fro
 And in styнк/ and orrible payne 3816
 he starf^t ful wrecchedly in a mountayne
 Thus hap þis robbour and þis homicide /
 That^t many a man made wepe and playne /
 Swich guerdoun is þat longeþ vnto pryde 3820
 [No break in the MS.]

The story of alisaunder is so comune ¶ De alexandro
 That^t every wight^t þat hap discrecioun magno philip-
 hap herd som what^t or al of^t this fortune pi regis mace-
 Thys wyde world as in conclusioun donie filio &c / 3824
 he wan by strengþe or for his heigh renoun
 Thay were glad for pees vnto him sende
 The pride of man and bost^t he layd a doun
 Wher-so he cam. vnto þe worldes ende / 3828

Comparisoun 3it mighte neuer be maked
 Bitwen him and noon oþer conquerour
 For al þis world for drede of him hap quaked
 he was of knyghthod and of fredam flour 3832
 Fortune him made þe heir of hir honour
 Saue wyn and wymmen no þing^t might^t aswage
 his heigh entent^t in armes and labour
 So was he ful of lumyne corage 3836

What^t pite were it to him þough I 3ow tolde
 Of Darius and an hundred þousand mo
 Of kynges princes Dukes and eorles bolde /
 which he conquered and brou3t/ vnto wo 3840
 I say as fer as men may ryde or go
 The world was his what schold I more deuyse /
 [. no gap in the MS.]
 Of his knighthood it mighte nou3t suffise / 3844

Twelft^r 3er he regned as saith machabe [leaf 236]
 Philippes son of Macedon he was
 That^r first^r was king^r in Crece þat contre
 O worþy gentil alisaundre alas 3848
 That^r euer schulde falle such a caas
 Empoysoned of þin oughne folk^r þou were
 Thyn fortune is torned in to an aas
 And right^r for þe ne wepte sche neuer a teere 3852

Who schal me ȝiue teeres to compleigne
 The dep^r of gentiles and of fraunchise
 That^r al þe worlde had in his demeigne
 And ȝit^r him þought^r it^r mighte nouȝt suffice 3856
 So ful was his corage of high emprise /
 Allas who schal helpe me to endite/
 Fals infortune and poysoun to deuyse
 The whiche two al þis wo I wyte 3860

[No break in the MS.]

By wisdom manhod and gret labour
 Fro humble bed to royal mageste /
 Vp roos he Iulius þe conquerour
 That^r wan al thoccident^r by land and see 3864
 By strengþe of hond or elles by trete /
 And vnto Rome made hem contributarie
 And sippe of Rome þemperour was he
 Til þat^r fortune wax his aduersarie / 3868

O mighty Cesar þat^r in Thessalie
 Agains pompious fader þin in lawe
 That^r of þe orient^r had al þe chiualrie
 Als fer as þat^r þe day bigynnes to dawe 3872
 Thorough þi knighthod þou hast^r him take and slawe
 Saue fewe folk^r þat^r with pompeus fledde
 þurgh which þou puttist^r al þorient in awe
 Thanke fortune þat^r so wel þe spedde 3876

But now a litel while I wil bywaile
 This pompeus þe noble gouernour
 Of Rome which þat flowe fro þis bataile
 Alas I say oon of his men a fals traitour 3880
 his heed of smoot to wyne his fauour
 Of Iulius and him þe heed he brouzt
 Alas pomp of þe orient conquerour
 That fortune to such a fyn þe brought 3884

[leaf 236, back]

To Rome agayn repaireþ Iulius
 wiþ his triumphe laurial ful hye
 But on a tyme brutus Cassius
 That euer had to his estat enuye / 3888
 Ful priuely haþ made conspiracie /
 Agains þis Iulius in subtil wise /
 Cast the place. in which he schulde dye
 with boydekyns as I schal 3ow deuyse / 3892

This Iulius to þe Capitoile went
 vpon a day as he was wont to goon
 And in þe Capitoil anoon him hent
 This false brutus and his oþer foon 3896
 And stiked him wiþ boydekyns anoon
 with many a wounde and þus þay let him lye
 But neuer gront he at no strook but oon
 Or elles at tuo but if þe storie lye 3900

So manly was þis Iulius of hert/
 And so wel loued estatly honeste
 That þough his deedly woundes sore smert
 his mantil ouer his hipes caste he 3904
 For no man schulde seen his priete
 And as he lay deyinge in a traunce
 And wiste wel þat verrayly deed was he
 Of honeste 3et had he remembraunce / 3908

Lucan to þe pis story I recomende
 And to Swetoun and to Valirien also
 That al þe story writen word and ende /
 how to þese grete conqueroures tuo 3912
 Fortune was first frend and sippen fo
 No man trust vpon hir favour longe /
 But haue hir in awayt for euermo
 witnesse on alle þise conqueroures stronge 3916
 [No break in the MS.]

Off riche gresus whilom king of lyde ¶ Gresus leuit-
 Of which gresus. Cirus him sore dradde / ici capitulo
 3et was he caught amyddes al his pride .ij.º de spiritu
 And to þe fuyr to brenne him men him ladde phitonisse ha-
 But such a rayn down fro þe heuen schadde¹ iiij.º libro Re-
 That slough þe fuyr and made him to eschape gum capitulo
 But to be war 3et grace noon he hadde / primo
 Til fortune on þe galwes made him gape [leaf 237] 3924

Whan he was eschaped he couþe nouȝt stent
 For to bygynne a newe werre agayn
 he wende wel for þat fortune him sent
 Such hap þat he eschaped þurgh þe rayn 3928
 That of his foos he mighte not be slayn
 And eek a sweuen vpon a night he mette
 Of which he was so proud and eek so fayn
 That in vengeaunce he al his herte sette / 3932

Vpon a tree he was set as him pouȝt
 wher Iubiter him wissch boþe bak and side
 And phebus eek a fair towail him brouȝt
 To drye him with and þerfore wax his pride 3936
 And to his douȝter þat stood him biside
 which þat he knew in heigh science abounde /
 And bad hire telle what it signifyde
 And sche his dreem right þus gan expounde / 3940

The tree quod sche þe galwes is to mene
 And Iubiter likenith snow and rayn
 And phebus with his towail so clene
 Tho ben þe sonne stremes soþ to sayn 3944
 Thow schalt' enhangid ben fader certayn
 Rayn schal þe wasch and sonne schal þe drye
 Thus warned sche him ful plat and ek ful playn
 his doughter which þat' called was phanie 3948

And hanged was Gresus þis proude king
 his real tour might' him not' auaille /
 Tegredis ne noon oþer maner þing'
 Ne can in I synge crie ny biwayle 3952
 But' for þat' fortune wil alway assayle
 wiþ vnwar strook' þe regnes þat' ben proude
 For whan men trusteth hir than wil sche faile
 And couer hir brighte face with a clowde 3956
 ¶ Here endep þe monk' his tale

[No break in the MS.]

¶ & here bygyrne þe prologe
of þe Nonne prestes tale. of þe kok' and þe hen.

HO sire quod the knight' no more of þis [leaf 237, back]
That 3e han said is right' ynough y-wys
And mochil mor. for litel heuynesse

Is right' I-nough for moche folk' I gesse 3960

I say for me it' is a gret disease
wher as men han ben in gret welþe and ease
To hieren of her sodeyn fal allas

And þe contraire is ioye and gret solas 3964

As whan a man haþ ben in pore estate

And clymbith vp and wexeþ fortunate

And þer abydeþ in prosperite

Such þing' is gladsom as þinkith me 3968

And of such þing' were goodly for to telle

3e quod our host' by seinte paules belle

3e say right' soþ þis monk' haþ clappid lowde

he spak' how fortune was clipped with a clowde 3972

I not' neuer what' and als of tregedie

Right' now 3e herd and pardy no remedye

It' is for to bywayle or compleyne

That þat' is doon and also it' is a peyne 3976

As 3e han said to hieren of heuynesse /

Sire monk' no more of þis. so god 3our soule blesse

3our tale anoyeth al þis compaignie

Such a tale is nouȝt' worth' a boterflye 3980

For þer Inne is noon disport' ne game

wherfor sir monk'. damp Pieres by 3our name

I pray 3ow hertly tel vs som what' ellis

For sicurly ner gingling' of þe bellis 3984

þat' on þour bridil hong' on euery syde
 By heuen king' þat' for vs alle dyde
 I schold er þis han falle doun for sleep
 Al þough þe slough had neuer ben so deep 3988
 Than had þour tale. haue be told in vayn
 For certeynly as þese clerkes sayn
 wher as a man may haue noon audience
 Nought helpith it to tellen his sentence 3992
 And wel I wot' þe substance is in me
 If' eny þing' schal wel reported be
 Sir say som what' of' huntyng' I þow pray [leaf 238]
 Nay quod þe monk' I haue no lust' to play 3996
 Now let' another telle as I haue told //
 Than spak' our ost' wiþ rude speche and bold //
 And said vnto the nonnes prest anoon //
 Come ner þou prest'. come ner þou sîr Iohān //
 Tel vs such þing' as may our hertes glade 4000
 Be bliþe al þough þou ryde vpon a iade //
 what' þough þin hors be boþe foul and lene //
 If' he wil serue þe rek' not' a bene //
 lok' þat' þin hert' be mery euer mo //
 3is sire 3is hoste. also mot I go //
 But' I be mery I-wis I wol be blamed //
 And right' anoon he haþ his tale tamyd //
 And þus he sayd vnto vs euerich oon //
 This sweete prest this goodly man sir Iohān ¶ Explicit
 prologus

[No break in the MS.]

¶ Here bygynneth the Nonne prest his tale

A Pore wydow . som del stōpe in age
 was whilom duellyng^t in a pore cotage 4012
 Bisyde a groue stondyng^t in a dale
 This wydow of^t which I telle ȝow my tale
 Syn þilke day þat^t sche was last^t a wif^t /
 In paciens ladde . a ful symple lyf^t 4016
 For litel was hir catel and hir rent
 By housbondry . of^t such as god hir sent
 Sche fond hir self^t and eek^t hir doughtres tuo
 Thre large sowes had sche and no mo 4020
 Thre kyn . and eek^t a scheep þat^t highte malle .
 Ful sooty was hir bour and eek^t hir halle
 In which she eet ful many a sclender meel
 Of^t poynaunt^t saws hir needid neuer a deel 4024
 Noon deynteth morsel passid þorugh hir þrote
 Hir dyete was accordant^t to hir cote
 Repleccioun ne made hir neuer sik^t
 Attempre dyete was al hir phisik^t 4028
 And exercise and hertes suffisaunce
 The goute lette hir no þing^t for to daunce
 Ne poplexie schente not^t hir heed
 No wyn ne drank^t he noþer whit ne reed [*leaf 238, back*] 4032
 Hir bord seruyd boþe with whit^t and blak^t
 Milk^t and broun bred in which sche fond no lak^t
 Saynd bacoun and som tyme an ey or tweye
 For sche was as it^t were a maner deye 4036
 A ȝerd sche had enclosed al aboute
 wip stikkas and a drye dich wipoute
 In which she had a Cok^t þat^t hight^t Chaunteclere
 In al þe lond of^t crowyng^t was noon his peere 4040

His vois was merier þan þe mery Orgon
 On masse dayes þat in þe chirche goon
 wel sikerer was his crowyng in his logge
 þan is a Clok or an abbay Orogge 4044
 By nature knew he ech ascensioun
 Of equinoxial in pilke toun
 For whan degrees fyftene were ascendid
 Thanne crew he it might not ben amendid 4048
 His comb was redder þan þe fyn coral
 And batayld as it were a castel wal
 his bile was blak and as þe geet it schon
 lik asur were. his legges and his ton 4052
 His nayles whitter þan þe lily flour
 And lik þe burnisch gold was his colour
 This gentil cok had in his gouernaunce
 Seuen hennes for to do al his plesaunce 4056
 whiche were his sustres and his paramoures
 And wonder lik to him as of coloures
 Of whiche þe fairest hiewed on hir þrote
 was cleped fayre damysel pertilote 4060
 Curteys sche was discret and debonaire
 And companable and bar hir self ful faire
 Syn pilke day þat sche was seuen 3er old
 That sche hap trewely þe hert in hold 4064
 Of chaunteclere loken in euery lith
 He loued hir so þat wel him was per-with
 But such a ioye was it to here him synge
 whan þat þe bryghte sonne gan to springe 4068
 In swete accord my lief is faren on londe
 Fro pilke tyme as I haue vnderstonde
 Bestis and briddes cowde speke and synge
 And so byfel þat in a dawenyng 4072
 As Chaunteclere among his wyues alle /
 Sat on his perche þat was in his halle
 And next him sat þis faire pertelote
 This Chauntecler gan gronen in his þrote 4076

[leaf 239]

As man þat' in his dreem is drecched sore /
 And whan þat' Pertelot' þus herd him rore
 Sche was agast' and sayde herte deere
 what eylith 3ow to grone in þis manere 4080
 3e ben a verray sleper fy for schame
 And he answerd and sayde þus ma dame
 I pray 3ow þat' 3e take it nou3t agreef'
 By god me mette I was in such meschief' 4084
 Right' now þat' 3it myn hert' is sore afright'
 Now god quod he my sweuen rede aright'
 And keep my body out' of foul prisoun
 Me mette how þat I romed vp and doun 4088
 wipinne oure 3erd wher as I saugh a beest/
 was lik' an hound and wold haue maad arrest/
 Vpon my body and wold han had me deed
 His colour was bitwixe 3olow and reed 4092
 And tipped was his tail and bope his eeres
 with blak'/. vnlik' þe remenaunt of his heres
 His snowt' was smal with glowynge yen tweye
 3et' of his look' for fer almost I deye 4096
 This caused me my gronyng' douteles
 A way quod sche. fy on 3ow herteles
 Allas quod sche for by þat' god aboue
 Now haue 3e lost myn hert' and al my loue 4100
 I can nought' loue a coward by my feith
 For certis what' so eny womman seith
 we alle desiren if it mighte be
 To haue housbondes hardy riche and fre 4104
 And secre and no nygard ne no fool
 Ne him þat is agast' of euery tool
 Ne noon anaunter by þat god aboue
 How dorst' 3e sayn for schame vnto 3our loue [U 239, lk] 4108
 That' any þing' might' make 3ow afferd
 haue 3e no mannes hert and han a berd
 Allas and can 3e ben agast' of sweuenys
 Nought' god wot / but' vanite in sweuen is 4112

Sweuens engendrid ben of replecciouns
 And often of fume and of complexiouns
 whan humours ben to abundaunt in a wight
 Certes þis dreem which 3e han met to-night 4116
 Comeþ of þe grete superfluite
 Of 3oure reede Colera parde
 which causeth folk to dremen in here dremes
 Of arwes and of fuyr with reede beemes 4120
 Of rede bestis þat þai wil him byte /
 Of Contek and of whelpis greet and lite
 Right as þe humour of malencolie
 Causeþ in sleep ful many a man to crye 4124
 For fere of beres or of boles blake
 Or elles blake deueles wol hem take
 Of oper humours couþe I telle also
 That wirken many a man in slep ful woo 4128
 But I wol passe as light[ly] as I can
 lo Catoun which þat was so wis a man
 Sayde he nouȝt þus ne do no force of dremes
 Now sire quod sche whan we fle fro þise beemes 4132
 For goddis loue as tak som laxatyf
 Vp peril of my soule and of my lyf
 I counsel 3ow þe best I wol not lye
 [. 4136
 *no gap in the MS.*]
 Though in þis toun is noon apotecarie
 I schal my-self tuo herbes techyn 3ow
 That schal be for 3our hele and for 3oure prow 4140
 And in oure 3erd þo herbes schal I fynde
 The whiche han of her proprete by kynde
 To purgen 3ow byneþe and eek aboue
 Forget not þis for goddis oughne loue 4144
 3e ben ful colerik of complexioun
 ware þe sonne in his ascencioun
 Ne fynd 3ow not/ replet in humours hote
 And if it do I dar wel lay a grote [leaf 240] 4148

That' 3e schul haue a feuer terciane
 Or an agu þat' may be 3oure bane
 A day or tuo 3e schul haue digestiues
 Of' wormes er 3e take 3our laxatiues 4152
 Of' lauriol Century and fumytere
 Or elles of' Elder bery þat' growith þere /
 Of' Catapus or of' gaytre berijs
 Of' erbe yue groweþ in our 3erd þer mery is 4156
 Pike hem vpright' as þay growe and et hem In ·
 Be mery housbond for 3our fader kyn
 Dredip non dremes I can say no more
 Ma dame quod he graunt' mercy of' 3our lore 4160
 But' napeles as touching' daun Catoun
 That' hath of' wisdom such a gret' renoun
 Though þat' he bad no dremes for to drede
 By god men may in olde bookes rede 4164
 Of' many a man more of' auctorite
 That' euer catoun was so mot' I the
 That' al þe reuers sayn of' his sentence
 And han wel founden by experience 4168
 That' dremes ben significaciouns
 As wel of' ioye as of' tribulaciouns
 That' folk' enduren in þis lif' present
 Ther nedeth make of' þis noon argument 4172
 The verray preue schewith it in dede
 Oon of' þe grettest' auctorite þat' men rede
 Saith þus · þat' whilom tway felawes wente
 On pylgrimage in a ful good entente / 4176
 And happed so þay com in to a toun
 wher as þer was such congregacioun
 Of' people and eek' so streyt' of' herbergage
 þat' þay fond nouȝt' as moche as oon cotage / 4180
 In which þat' þay might' boþe I-logged be
 wherfor þay mosten of' necessite
 As for þat' night' depart' her compaignye
 And ech of' hem goþ to his hostelrye 4184

And took^t his loggyng^t as it wolde falle
 That^t oon of^t hem was logged in a stalle [leaf 240, back]
 Fer in a 3erd with oxen of^t þe plough
 That^t oþer man was logged wel ynough 4188
 As was his aduenture or fortune
 That^t vs gouernith alle in comune
 And so bifel þat^t long^t er it^t were day
 This oon met^t in his bed þer as he lay 4192
 how þat^t his felaw gan vpon him calle
 And sayd allas for in an oxe stalle /
 This night^t I schal be murdrid þer I lye
 Now help me deere broþer or I dye 4196
 In alle cum to me he sayde
 This man out of^t his slep for fer abrayde
 But^t whan þat^t he was waked out^t of^t his sleep
 he torned him and took^t of^t þis no keep 4200
 him þough^t him dreem nas but a vanite /
 Thus twies in his sleepe dremed he
 And at/ þe þridde tyme 3et his felawe
 Com as him þough^t and sayd I am now slawe 4204
 Bihold my bloody woundes deep and wyde
 Arise vp erly in þe morwe tyde /
 And at the west^t gate of^t þe toun quod he /
 A cart^t of^t donge þere schalt^t þou see 4208
 In which my body is hyd priuely
 Do þilke cart^t arresten boldely
 My gold caused my mourdre soþ to sayn
 And told him euery poynt^t how he was slayn 4212
 with a ful pitous face pale of^t hewe
 And truste wel his dreem he fond ful trewe /
 For on þe morwe as sone as it was day
 To his felawes In he took^t þe way 4216
 And whan þat^t he cam to þis oxe stalle
 After his felaw he bigan to calle /
 The hostiller answered him anoon
 And sayde sire 3our felaw is agoon 4220

Als soone as day he went/ out of þe toun
 This man gan falle in a suspeccioun
 Remembring^t on his dremes þat^t he mette /
 And forth he goth no lenger wold he lette [leaf 241] 4224
 Vnto þe west^t gate of þe toun and fond
 A dong^t cart^t went^t as it^t were to donge lond
 That^t was arrayed in þe same wise
 As ȝe han herd þe deede man deuise / 4228
 And with an hardy hert^t he gan to crie
 Vengeaunce and iustice of þis felonye
 My felaw mordrid is þis same night^t
 And in þis carte . he lith heer vpright 4232
 I crye out^t on þe ministres quod he /
 That^t schulde kepe and reule þis Cite
 harrow allas her lith my felaw slayn
 what^t schold I more vnto þis tale sayn 4236
 The peple vpstert^t and caste þe carte to grounde /
 And in þe myddes of þe dong^t þay founde
 The dede man þat^t mordred was al newe /
 O blisful god þou art^t ful iust^t and trewe 4240
 Lo how þow bywreyst^t mordre al day
 Mordre wil out certes it is no nay
 Morder is so wlatson and abhominable
 To god that^t is so iust^t and resonable 4244
 That^t he ne wold nouȝt^t suffre it^t hiled be
 Though it abyde a ȝeer or tuo or þre
 Morder wil out þis is my conclusioun
 And right^t anon þe mynistres of þat^t toun 4248
 Han hent^t þe carter and so sore him pynd
 And eek^t the hostiller so sore engyned
 That^t þay biknew her wikkednes anon
 And were anhonged by þe nekke boon 4252
 Here may men se þat^t dremys ben to drede
 And Certes in þe same book^t I rede
 Right^t in þe nexte Chapitre after þis
 I gabbe nought^t so haue I ioye or bliss 4256

Tuo men þat wolde haue passed ouer see /
 For certeyn causes in-to fer cuntre
 If þat þe wynd ne hadde ben contrarie
 That/ made hem in a Cite for to tarie 4260
 That stood ful mery vpon an hauen syde /
 But on a day agayn þe euen tyde [leaf 241, back]
 The wynd gan chaunge and [blew] right as him list
 Iolyf and glad þey wenten vnto rest 4264
 And casten hem ful erly for to sayle
 But herkneþ to þat oon man fel a gret meruayle
 That oon of hem in his slepyng as he lay
 him met a wonder drem a-gayn þe day 4268
 him þought a man stood by his beddes syd
 And him comaunded þat he schuld abyde
 And sayd him þus if þou to morwe wende
 Thow schalt be dreynt my tale is at an ende 4272
 ¶ He wook and told his felaw what he mette
 And prayde him his viage to lette
 As for þat day he prayd him to abyde
 his felaw þat lay by his beddis syde 4276
 Gan to lawgh and scorned him ful fast
 No dreem quod he may so myn herte gaste /
 That I wil lette for to do my þinges
 I sette not a straw by þy dremynges 4280
 For sweuens been but vanitees and iapes
 Men dreme al day of owles and of apes
 And eke of many a mase þer with al
 Men dreme of þinges þat neuer be schal 4284
 But sith I see þat þou wilt her abyde /
 And þus forslouthe wilfully þy tyde
 God wot it reweth me and haue good day
 And þus he took his leue and went his way 4288
 But er he hadde half his cours I-sayled
 Noot I nouȝt why. ne what meschaunce it ayled
 But casuely þe schippes bothom rent
 And schip and man vnder þe watir went 4292

In sight^t of^t oper schippes þer byside
 That^t with him sailed at þe same tyde
 And þerfore faire pertelot^t so deere
 By such ensamples olde maistow leere 4296
 That^t no man scholde be to recheles
 Of^t dremes for I say þe douteles
 That many a dreem ful sore is for to drede
 Lo in þe lif^t of^t seint/ kenelm I rede [leaf 242] 4300
 That^t was kenulphus sone þat^t noble king^t
 Of^t mertinrike how kenilm mette a þing^t
 A lutil he was mordred vpon a day
 His mordre in his auysiouⁿ he say 4304
 His norice him expouned euerydel
 His sweuen and bad him for to kepe him wel
 For traisoun for he nas but^t seuen 3er old
 And þerfore litel tale haþ he told 4308
 Of^t eny drem so holy was his hert
 By god I hadde leuer þan my schert
 þat^t 3e had rad his legend as haue I
 Dame pertelot I say 3ow trewely 4312
 Macrobius þat^t writ^t þe avisioun
 In auffrik^t of^t þe worþy Cipiouⁿ
 Affermeþ dremes and saith þat^t þay been
 Warnyng^t of^t þinges þat^t men after seen 4316
 And forþermore I pray 3ow lokeþ wel
 In þe olde testament^t of^t Daniel
 If^t he huld dremes eny vanyte /
 Rede eek^t of^t Ioseph and þer schal 3e see / 4320
 wheþir dremes ben som tyme I say nought^t alle
 warnyng^t of^t þinges þat^t schul after falle
 Lok^t of^t Egipt^t þe king^t daun pharao
 his baker and his botiler also 4324
 whethir þay felte noon effect in dremis
 who-so wol seke actes of^t sondry remys
 May rede of^t dremes many a sondry þing^t
 Lo Cresus which þat^t was of^t lydes king^t 4328

Mette þat he sat vpon a tre
 which signified he schuld hanged be /
 Lo hir andromachia Ectors wif
 That day þat Ector schulde lese his lif 4332
 Sche dremed on þe same night byforn
 how þat þe lif of Ector schulde be lorn
 If pilke day he wente to batayle /
 Sche warned him but it might nouȝt auaille / 4336
 He wente forþ to fighte napeles
 But he was slayn anoon of achilles [leaf 212, back]
 But pilke tale is al to long to telle/
 And eek/ it is neigh day I may not duelle 4340
 Schortly I say as for conclusioun
 That I schal haue of þis auisioun
 Aduersite and I say forþermore
 That I ne telle of laxatifs no store 4344
 For þay ben venemous I wot it wel
 I hem defye I loue hem neuer a del
 Now let vs speke of mirth and lete al þis
 Madame pertilot so haue I blis 4348
 Of o þing god haþ me sent large grace
 For whan I see þe beaute of ȝour face
 ȝe ben so scarlet hiew about ȝour eyȝen
 hit makith al my drede for to deyȝen 4352
 For als siker as In principio
 Mulier est hominis confusio
 Madame þe sentence of þis latyn is
 womman is mannes ioye and mannes blis 4356
 For when I fiele a-night ȝour softe syde /
 Al be it þat I may not on ȝou ryde
 For þat ȝour perche is mad so narrow allas /
 I am so ful of ioye and solas 4360
 That I defye boþ sweuen and drem
 And with þat word he fleigh down fro þe beem
 For it was day and eek his hennes alle
 with a chuk. he gan hem for to calle / 4364

For he had found a corn lay in þe 3^{er}d
 Real he was he was nomore aferd
 he fetherid pertelote . twenty tyme
 And trad as ofte er þat' it' was prime 4368
 he lokith as it were a grim lioun
 And on his toon he romeþ vp and down
 him deyneth not' to set' his foot' to grounde
 And chukkiþ whan he haþ a corn I-founde 4372
 And to him rennen þan his wifes alle
 Thus real as a prince is in his halle
 ¶ Leue I þis Chauntecler in his pasture
 And after wol I telle his aduenture [leaf 213] 4376
 whan þat' þe moneth in which þe world bigan
 That' highte march whan god maked first' man
 was complet' and passed were also
 Syn march bygan tway monþes and dayes tuo 4380
 Byfeþ þat' Chauntecler in al his pride
 His seuen wyues walkyng' by his syde
 Cast' vp his eyzen to þe bryghte sonne
 That' in þe signe of' Taurus had I-ronne 4384
 Twenty degrees and oon and som what' more
 And knew by kynde and by noon oþer lore
 þat' it' was prime and crew with blisful steuen
 The sonne he sayde . is clomben vpon heuen 4388
 Twenty degrees and oon and som what' more I-wis
 Ma dame pertelot' my worldes blis
 Herknith þese blisful briddes how þay synge /
 And seth þese freissche floures how þay springe 4392
 Ful is myn hert' of' reuel and solaas
 But' sodeinly him fel a sorwful caas
 For euer þe latter end of' ioye is wo
 God wot' þat' worldly ioye is soone ago 4396
 And if' [a] Rethor couþe faire endite
 hem a Cronique saufly might' he write
 As for a souerayn notabilite ¶ Petrus comestor
 Now euery wys man let' him herkne me 4400

This story is also trewe I vndertake
 As þe book^t is of^t Launcelot^t þe lake
 That^t womman huld in ful gret^t reuerence
 Now wol I torne agayn to my sentence 4404
 A Colefox ful / sleigh of^t iniquite
 That^t in þe groue had woned 3eres þre
 By heigh ymaginacioun forncast^t
 The same nighte þurgh þe hegge brast^t 4408
 In to þe 3erd þer Chaunteclere þe faire
 was went^t and eek^t his wyues to repaire
 And in a bed of^t wortes stille he lay
 Til it was passed vndern of^t þe day 4412
 waytyng^t his tyme on Chaunteclere to falle /
 As gladly doon þese homicides alle [leaf 213, back]
 That^t in awayte lyn to morthen men
 O false morderer lurkyng^t in þy den 4416
 O newe Scariot newe Genilon
 Fals dissimilour. greke Synon
 That^t broughtest^t troye al outrely to sorwe
 O Chauntecler. O cursed be þe morwe 4420
 That^t þou in to þe 3erd flough fro þe bemys
 Thow were ful wel I-warned by þy dremys
 That^t þilke day was perilous to þe
 But^t what^t þat^t god forwot^t most^t needes be / 4424
 After þe opynyoun of^t certeyn clerkis
 witnesse on him þat^t eny clerk is
 That^t in scole is gret^t altercacioun
 In þis matier and gret^t desputesoun 4428
 And hath ben of^t an hundred þousend men
 But^t 3it^t I can not^t. bult^t it to þe bren
 As can þe holy doctor augustyn
 Or boece. or þe bisshop Bradwardyn 4432
 Wheþer þat^t goddis worþy forwetyng^t
 Streigneth me needely for to do a þing^t
 Needely clepe I simple necessite
 Or elles. if fre choys be graunted me 4436

To do þat same þing or to do it nouȝt
 Though god forwot it er þat it was wrought
 Or of his wityng streyneþ neuer a deel
 But by necessite condicionel 4440
 I wol not haue to do of such matiere
 My tale is of a Cok as ȝe schal hiere
 That took his counseil of his wyf with sorwe /
 To walken in þe ȝerd vpon þe morwe 4444
 That he had met þe dreame þat I tolde
 wymmens counseiles ben fulofte colde
 wommannes counseil brouȝt vs first to woo
 And made adam fro paradys to go 4448
 Ther as he was ful mery and wel at ease
 But for I not to him it might displease
 If I counseil of womman wolde blame
 Pas ouer for I sayd it in my game [leaf 214] 4452
 Red auctours wher þay trete of such matiere
 And what þay sayn of wommen ȝe may heere
 These ben þe cokkes wordes and not myne
 I can / noon harme / of wommen diuine / 4456
 Faire in þe sond to baþe hir merily
 lith pertelot and alle hir sustres by
 Agayn þe sonne and Chaunteclere so free
 Sang merier þan þe meremayd in þe see 4460
 For phisiologus seith sicurly
 how þat þay syngen wel and merily
 And so byfel þat as he cast his ye
 Among þe wortes on a boterflye 4464
 he was war of þis fox þat lay ful lowe
 No þing ne list him þanne for to crowe
 But cryde anon . cok . cok / . and vp he stert
 As man þat was affrayd in his hert 4468
 For naturelly a beest desireth flee
 Fro his contrarie if / he may it see
 þough he neuer er had sayn it with his ye
 þis Chaunteclere whan he gan it aspye 4472

he wold han fled but þat þe fox anon
 Said gentil sire / allas why wol 3e goon
 Be 3e affrayd of me þat am 3oure frend
 Certes I were worse þan any feend 4476
 If I to 3ow wold harm or vilonye
 I am nouȝt come 3our counsail to espye
 [.
 *no gap in the MS.*] 4480
 But trewely 3e haue als mery a steuen
 As eny aungel hath þat is in heuen
 Ther wiþ 3e han in musik more felynge
 Than had Boece or eny þat can synge 4484
 My lord 3our fader god his soule blesse /
 And 3oure moder of her gentilesse
 han in myn hous I-been to my gret ease
 And Certes sire ful fayn wold I 3ow please 4488
 But for men speke of syngyng I wol say
 So mot I brouke wel myn yen tway
 Saue 3e I herde neuer man so synge
 As dede 3our fadir in þe morwenynge [*leaf 244, back*] 4492
 Certes it was of hert al þat he song
 And for to make his vois þe more strong
 he wold so peynen him þat wiþ boþe his yen
 he moste wynke so lowde he wolde crien 4496
 And stonden on his typtoon þer wiþ al
 And streche forth his necke long and smal
 And eek / he was of such discressioun
 That þer nas no man in no regioun 4500
 That him in song or wisdom mighte passe
 I haue wel rad in Daun Burnel thasse
 Among his verses how þer was a Cok
 For a prestes sone ȝaf him a knok 4504
 vpon his leg whil he was 3ong and nyce
 He made him for to lese his benefice
 But certeyn þer is no comparisoun
 Bitwix þe wisdom and discressioun 4508

Of þoure fader and of his subtilte
 Now syngþ sire for seinte charite
 let se can 3e þour fader countrefete
 This Chanteclere his wynges gan to bete 4512
 As man that couþe his tresoun noughþ espye
 So was he rauyssht wip his flaterie
 Allas lordynges many a fals flatour
 Is in þour hous and many a losengour 4516
 That pleasen þow wel more by my faith
 Than he þat soþfastnesse vnto þow saith
 Rediþ Ecclesiast of flaterie
 Beþ war 3e lordes of her treccherie / 4520
 This Chaunteclere stood heihe vpon his toos
 Strecching his necke and his yhen cloos
 And gan to crowe lowde for þe noones/
 And daun Russel þe fox stert vp at oones 4524
 And by þe garget hente Chaunteclere
 And on his bak toward þe woode him bere
 For 3it was þere / no man þat him sewed
 O desteny þat maist not ben eschiewed 4528
 Allas þat Chaunteclere fleigh fro þe bemis
 Allas his wif roughte nought of dremis [leaf 245]
 And on a friday fel al þis meschaunce
 O venus þat art god of pleasaunce 4532
 Syn þat þy seruant was þis Chaunteclere
 And in þy seruice did al his powere
 More for delit þan þe world to multiplie
 why woldest þou suffre him on þy day to dye 4536
 O gaufred dere mayster souerayn
 That whan þe worþy king Richard was slayn
 with schot compleynedist/ his deþ so sore
 why ne had I nouȝt þy sentence and þy lore 4540
 þe friday for to chiden as dede 3e
 For on a fryday soþly slayn was he
 Than wold I schewe how þat I couþe pleyne /
 For Chauntecleres drede and for his payne 4544

Certis such cry ne lamentacioun
 was neuer of ladies maad whan Ilioun
 was wonne and pirrus with his strit swerd
 whan he hente kyng' priam by þe berd 4548
 And slough him as saith vs Eneydos
 As maden alle þe hennes in þe clos
 whan þay had sayn of Chauntecler þe sight
 Nought' soueraignly . dam pertelote schright' 4552
 Ful lowder þan did hasdrubaldes wyf
 whan þat' hir housebond had lost/ his lyf
 And þat' þe Romayns had I-brent' Cartage
 Sche was so ful of torment' and of rage / 4556
 That' wilfully vnto þe fuyr sche stert
 And brend hir seluen with a stedfast' hert
 O woful hennes right' so cride 3e
 As whan þat' Nero brente þe cite 4560
 Of Rome criden þe senatoures wyues
 For þat' her housbondes losten alle here lyues
 wipouten gult þis nero hath hem slayn
 Now wol I torne to my matier agayn 4564
 ¶ The sely wydow and hir doughtres tuo
 herden þese hennys crie and maken wo
 And out' at dores starte þay anoon
 And sayden þe fox toward þe woode is goon [*lf* 245, *bk*] 4568
 And bar vpon his bak' þe cok' away
 And criden out' harrow and wayleway
 ha . ha . þe fox and after him þay ran
 And eek' with staues many anoþer man 4572
 Ran Colle our dogge and talbot' and Garlond
 And Malkyn wip a distaf' in hir hond
 Ran cow and calf' and þe verray hoggoes
 So were þey fered for berkyng' of dogges 4576
 And schowtyng' of þe men and wymmen eke
 þay ronne þat' þay þought' her herte breke
 Thay 3elleden as feeldes doon in helle
 The dokes criden as men wold hem quelle 4580

The gees for fere flowen ouer þe trees
 Out of þe hyues cam þe swarm of bees
 So hidous was þe noyse a benedicite
 Certes þough Iakke straw and his meyne 4584
 Ne maden schoutes neuer half so schrille
 whan þat þay wolden eny flemyng kille /
 As þilke day was maad vpon þe fox
 Of bras þay brough hornes and of box 4588
 Of horn of boon in which þay blew and powped
 And þer with al thay schryked and þay howped
 It semed as þat heuen schulde falle
 Now goode men I pray herkneþ alle / 4592
 lo how fortune torneþ sodeinly
 The hope and pride eek of her enuy
 This Cok þat lay vpon þis foxes bak
 In al his drede vnto the fox he spak 4596
 And saide sire if þat I were as 3e
 3et schuld I sayn as wis god helpe me
 Turneþ aȝein 3e proude cherles alle
 A verray pestilens vpon 3ow falle / 4600
 Now am I come vnto þis woodes syde /
 Maugre 3oure heed þe Cok / schal heer abyde
 I wol him ete in faith and þat anon
 The Fox answerd in faith it schal be doon 4604
 And whil he spak þat word al sodeinly
 This Cok brak from his mouth delyuerly [leaf 216]
 And heigh vpon a tree he fleigh anon
 And whan þe fox seigh þat he was I-goon 4608
 Allas quod he o. Chaunteclere allas
 I haue to 3ow quod he y-don trespas
 In as moche as I makid 3ow aferd
 whan I 3ow hent and brouȝt out of þe 3erd 4612
 But sire I dede it in no wicked entent
 Com down and I schal telle 3ow what I ment
 I schal say soþ to 3ow god help me so
 Nay þan quod he I schrew vs boþe tuo 4616

And first I schrew my self bope blood and boones
 If þou bigile me . any ofter þan oones
 Thou schalt no more þurgh þy flaterye
 Do me to synge and wynke with myn ye 4620
 For he þat wynkith whan he scholde se
 Al wilfully god let him neuer the
 Nay quod þe Fox but god giue him meschaunce /
 þat is so vndiscret of gouernaunce / 4624
 þat iangleth whan he scholde holde his pees
 Lo such it is for to be recheles
 And necligent and trust on flaterie /
 But 3e þat holde / þis tale a folye / 4628
 As of a Fox . or of a cok or of an hen
 Takith þe moralite goode men
 For seint poul saip þat al þat writen is
 To oure doctrine it is I-write I-wys 4632
 Takith þe fruyt and let þe chaf be stille
 Now goode god . if þat it be þy wille
 As saith my lor so make vs alle good men
 And bring vs alle . to his blisse ameN 4636
 ¶ Here endep þe tale of Chaunteclere and pertelote

[No break in the MS.]

¶ Here bygynneþ þe prologe of þe maunciples tale

WOt 3e not wher þer stont a litel toun
which þat cleped is Bob vp and down
vnder þe Ble in Caunterbury way

Ther gan our hoste for to iape and play 4

And sayde sires what dun is in þe myre

Is þer no man for prayer ne for hyre [leaf 246, back]

Thal wol awake our felawes al by-hynde

A theef mighte ful lightly robbe and bynde 8

Se how he nappith se for goddes boones

That he wol falle fro his hors at ones

Is þat a Cook of londoun wiþ meschaunce /

Do him come forth he knoweth his penaunce / 12

For he schal telle a tale by my fay

Al þough it be nouȝt worþ a botel hay

Awake þou Cook sit vp god ȝif þe sorwe

what eyleþ þe to slepe by þe morwe / 16

Hast þou had fleen al night or artow dronke

Or hastow with some quen al night I-swonke

So þat þou maist not holden vp þyn heed

This cook þat was pale and no þing reed 20

Sayd to our host so god my soule blesse /

As þer is falle on me such heuynesse

Not I nouȝt why þat me were leuer slepe /

Than þe beste galoun wyn in Chepe / 24

¶ wel quod þe maunciple if þat I may doon ease /
 To þe sir Cook and to no wízt displease /
 which þat her rydeþ in þis compaignye
 And our host wolde of his curteisie 28
 I wol as now excuse þe of þy tale
 For in good faith þi visage is ful pale
 þyn eyen daswen eek. also me þinkith
 And wel I woot þy breth ful foule stynkith 32
 That scheweþ eek þou art nought wel disposid
 Of me certeyn þou schalt nouzt ben I-glosed
 Se how he ganith. lo þis dronken wíght
 As þough he wolde swolwe vs anoon ríght 36
 hold clos þy mouth by þy fader kynne
 The deuel of helle sette his foot þer Inne
 Thy cursed breth effecte wil vs alle
 Fy stynkyng swyne foule mot þe falle 40
 A. takíþ heed sires of þis lusty man
 Now swete sir. wol 3e ioust atte fan
 Therto me þinkþ. 3e beþ ríght wel I-schape
 I trowe þa 3e dronken han wyn ape [leaf 247] 44
 And þat whan men playen with a straw
 And with his speche þe cook wax angry & wraw
 And on þe maunciple bygan he nodde fast
 For lak of speche. and down þe hors him cast 48
 wher as he lay til þat men him up took
 This was a fair Chiuache of a cook
 Allas þat he nad hold him by his ladil
 And er þat he agayn were in his sadil 52
 Ther was gret schowuyng bope to and fro
 To lift him vp and moche care and wo
 So vnwelde was þis sory pallid gost
 And to þe maunciple þanne spak oure host 56
 By cause drink hath dominacioun
 Vpon þis man by my sauacioun
 I trow he lewedly tel wol his tale
 For were it wyn or old moysty ale 60

þat he hæþ dronk^t. he spekiþ in his nose /
 And fnesith fast^t. and eek^t he hæþ þe pose
 he also to do more þan ynough
 To kepe him and his Capil out^t of þe slough 64
 And if he falle fro his capil eft^t sone:
 þan schal we alle haue ynough to doone
 In lifyng^t vp his heuy dronken cors
 Tel on thy tale of him make I no fors 68
 But^t 3it^t maunciple in faith þou art^t to nyce
 Thus openly reproeue him of his vice
 Anoper day he wil *par* aduenture
 Reclayme þe and bringe þe to lure 72
 I mene he speke wol of smale þinges
 As for to pynchyn at^t þy rekenynges
 That^t were not^t honest^t if it cam to pref^t
 Quod þe maunciple þat^t were a gret^t meschief^t 76
 So might^t he lightly bringe me in þe snare
 3it^t had I leuer payen for þe mare
 which he ryt^t on . þan he schulde *with* me stryue
 I wil not^t wrath him al so mot^t I þriue 80
 That^t at I spak^t I sayd it^t in my bourde
 And wite 3e what^t I haue heer in a gourde [*leaf 247, back*]
 A draught^t of wyn . is of a ripe grape /
 And right^t anoon 3e schal se a good iape 84
 þis Cook^t schal drinke þer-of if I may
 vp peyn of deth he wol nou3t^t say me nay
 And certainly to tellen as it was /
 Of þis vessel þe cook^t dronk^t fast^t allas 88
 what^t needid it . he drank^t ynough biforn
 And whan he hadde pouped in his horn
 To þe maunciple he took^t þe gourd agayn
 And of þat^t draught^t þe cook^t was wonder fayn 92
 And þanked him in such wise as he couþe /
 Than gan our host^t to laughe wonder louthe /
 And sayd I se wel it is necessarie
 wher þat^t we go good drynk^t wiþ vs to carie 96

For þat' wol torne rancour and desese
 To accord and loue and many racour pese /
 O þou bacus I-blessid be þin name
 That' so canst' torne earnest' in to game 100
 worschip and þonke . be to þy deite
 Of' þat' matier 3e get' no more of' me
 Tel on þi tale mauncipel I þe pray
 wel sir quod he . now herkyn what' I say ¶ Narrat 104

[*No break in the MS.*]

Whan phebus duelt^r her in þis erþe a doun
 As olde bookes maken mencion
 He was þe moste lusty bachiler
 Of al þis world and eek^t þe best^r archer 108
 He slough phiton þe serpent as he lay
 Slepynge agayn þe sonne vpon a day
 And many another noble worþy dede
 He with his bowe wrought^r as men may rede / 112
 Pleyen he couþe on euery mynstralcy
 And syngen þat^r it was a melodye
 To heren of his cleere vois þe soun
 Certes þe kyng^t of Thebes amphion 116
 That^r with his singyng^t wallid þat^r citee
 Couþe neuer synge half^r so wel as he /
 Ther-to he was þe semlieste man
 That is or was sipþen þe world bigan [leaf 218] 120
 what^r nedid it his fortune to descriue
 For in þis worlde is noon such on lyue
 he was þer with fulfild of gentilesce
 Of honour and of parfyt worþinesse 124
 This phebus þat^r was flour of bachilerie
 Als wel in fredom as in chualrie
 For to disport^r in signe of victorie
 Of phiton so as telleþ vs þe storie 128
 was wont^r to bere in his hond a bowe
 Now had þis phebus in his hous a crowe
 which in a cage he fostred many a day
 And taught^r it speken as men doon a iay 132

whit^t was þis crowe as is a snow-why^t swan
 And countrefete the speche of^t euery man
 he couþe whan he schulde telle a tale
 Ther is wipinne þis world no nightingale 136
 Ne couþe by an hundred þousend del
 Singe so wonder merily and wel
 Now had þis phebus in his hous a wyf^t
 which þat^t he loued. more þan his lif^t 140
 And night^t and day. did euermor diligence /
 hir for to please. and doon hir reuerence
 Sauþ^t oonly if^t þe soþ þat^t I schal sayn
 Ialous he was and wold haue kept hir fayn 144
 For him were loth biaped for to be /
 And so is euery wigh^t in such degre
 But^t al for nough^t for it auailleth nouȝt
 A good wyf^t þat^t is clene of^t werk^t and thought 148
 Schuld not^t be kept^t in noon awayt certayn
 And trewely þe labour is in vayn
 To kepe a schrewe for it wil nough^t be
 This hold I for a verray nycete 152
 To spille labour for to kepe wyues
 Thus olde clerkes writen in her lyues
 But^t now to purpos as I first^t bigan
 This worpi phebus doþ al þat^t he can 156
 To pleasen hir wenyng^t by such plesaunce /
 And for his manhod and his gouernaunce [leaf 248, back]
 That^t no man schuld han put^t him fro hir grace
 But^t god it^t woot^t. þer may no man embrace 160
 As to destroy a þing^t. þe which nature
 haþ naturelly. set^t in a creature
 Tak^t any brid and put him in a cage
 And do al þin entent and þy corrage 164
 To foster it tenderly wiþ mete and drynk^t
 And wiþ alle þe deyntees þou canst^t þink^t
 And keep it^t al so kyndly as þou may
 Al þough his cage of^t gold be neuer so gay 168

3it haþ þis brid by twenty þousand fold
 Leuer to be . in forest' wyd and cold
 Gon ete wormes and such wrecchidnes
 For euer þis brid wil doon his busynes 172
 To scape out' of his cage whan he may
 his liberte þe brid desireth ay
 let' take a cat and foster him wel wiþ mylk/
 And tender fleisch and mak' his bed of' silk/ 176
 And let' him see a mous go by þe wal
 Anoon he wayueth mylk' and fleisch and al
 And euery deynte which is in þat' hous
 Such appetit haþ he to ete þe mous 180
 lo heer haþ lust' his dominacioun
 And appetit . flemeth discr[e]scioun
 Also a sche wolf' haþ a vilayns kynde /
 The lewigest'. wolf' þat' sche may fynde 184
 Or lest' of' reputacioun him wol sche take
 In tyme whan hir lust/ to haue a make/
 Alle þis ensamples . tel I by þis men
 That' ben vntrewe and no þing' by wommen 188
 For men han euer a licorous appetit
 On lower þing' to parforme her delit
 Than on her wyues ben þay neuer so faire
 Ne neuer so trewe ne so debonaire 192
 Fleissch is so newfangil with meschaunce
 That' we can in no þinge haue plesaunce
 That' sounep in to vertu eny while
 This phebus which þat' þought vpon no gile [leaf 249] 196
 Deceyued was for al his iolite
 For vnder him anoþer hadde sche/
 A man of' litil reputacioun
 Nought' worþ to phebus in comparisoun 200
 Mor harm it is it' happeth ofte so
 Of' which þer comeþ boþe harm and woo
 And so bifel whan phebus was absent
 His wif' anoon hath for hir lemman sent 204

hir lemman certes. þis is a knauisch speche
 Forziueþ it me and þat I 3ow biseche
 The wise plato saith as 3e may rede
 þe word mot' neede accorde wip þe dede 208
 If men schal telle properly a þing'
 The word mot' corde wip þe þing' werkyng'
 I am a boystous [man] right thus say I
 There is no difference trewely 212
 Bytwix a wyf þat' is of' heigh degre /
 If of' hir body dishonest' sche be
 And a pore wenche oþer þen þis
 If so be þe pay werke boþe amys 216
 But' the gentil in estat' aboue
 Sche schal be cleped his lady as in loue
 And for þat' oþer is a pore womman
 Sche schal be cleped his wenche and his lemman 220
 And god it wot my goode lieue broþer
 Men layn þat' oon as lowe as þat oþer
 Right' so betwixe atticles tirant
 And an outlawe or a þef' erraunt 224
 The same I say þer is no difference
 To alisaunder told was þis sentence
 þat' for þe tiraunt is of' gretter might
 Bi force of' meyne for to sle down right 228
 And brenne hous and home and make al playn
 Lo þerfor is he cleped a Captayn
 And for an outlawe haþ so smal meyne
 And may not' doon so gret an harm as he 232
 Ne bringe a contre to so gret meschief' /
 Men clepen him an outlawe or a þeef' [leaf 249, back]
 But' for I am a man not' texted wel
 I wil not' telle of' textes neuer a del 236
 I wol go to my tale as I bigan
 whan phebus wyf' had sent' for hir lemman
 Anon þay wrou3ten al her wil volage
 This white crow / þat' heng' alway in cage 240

Bihiid her werk^t and sayde neuer a word
 And whan þat^t hom was come phebus þe lord
 This Crowe song^t. Cuckow . Cockow . Cuckow
 what^t bird quod phebus what^t song^t syngistow 244
 Ne were þou wont^t so merily to synge
 That^t to myn hert^t it was a reioysynge
 To here þi vois . allas what^t song^t is þis
 By god quod he I synge not^t amys 248
 Phebus quod he for al þy worþynes
 For al þy beaute and þy gentiles
 For alle þy songes and þy menstralcie /
 For al þy waytyng^t blered is þin ye / 252
 with oon of^t litel reputacioun
 Nought^t worth to þe as in comparisoun
 The mountauns of^t a gnat^t so mot^t I þriue
 For on þy bed þy wif^t I saugh him swyue 256
 what^t wol ȝe more þe crowe anon him tolde /
 By sadde toknes and by wordes bolde
 how þat^t his wyf^t had doon hir leccherie
 him to gret^t schame and to gret vilonye 260
 And told him oft/ he saugh it wiþ his yen
 This phebus gan awayward for to wryen
 him þought^t his sorwful herte brast^t on tuo
 his bowe he bent^t and sett^t þer-In a flo 264
 And in his ire he haþ his wif^t I-slayn
 þis is þeffect þer is no more to sayn
 For sorw of^t which he brak^t his menstralceye
 Boþe harp . giter . and sauterie 268
 And eek^t he brak^t his arwes and his bowe
 And after þat^t þus spak^t he to þe crowe
 Traytour quod he wiþ tunge of^t scorpioun
 Thow hast^t me brought^t to my confusioun [leaf 250] 272
 Allas þat^t I was born why nere I deed
 O dere wyf^t O gemme of^t lustyhed
 That^t were to me so sad and eek^t so trewe
 Now list þou deed with face pale of^t hewe 276

Ful gulteles þat dorst I swere I-wis
 O racle hond to do so foule amys
 O trouble wit O Ire recheles
 That vnaused smytet gulteles 280
 O wantrust ful of fals suspeccioun
 wher was þy wit and þy discrecioun
 O euery man be war of raclesnesse
 Ne trowe no þing wiþoute gret wisesse 284
 Smyt nouȝt to soone. er þat þou wite why /
 And be auysed wel and sobrelly
 Er ȝe doon eny execucioun
 Vpon ȝour Ire for suspeccioun 288
 Allas a þousand folk haþ racle Ire
 Fordoon. or dun hath brouȝt hem in þe myre
 Allas for sorw / I wil my seluen sle
 And to þe crowe o false þeef sayd he 292
 I wyl þe quyt anon þy false tale /
 Thow songe whilom as any nightyngale /
 Now schaltow false þeef þy song forgoon
 And eek þy white fetheres euerich oon 296
 Ne neuer in al þy lyf ne schaltow speke
 Thus schal men on a fals þeef ben a-wreke
 Thou and þin o[f]spring euer schuln be blake
 Ne neuer sweete noyse schul ȝe make 300
 But euer crye agayn tempest and rayn
 In tokenyng þat þurgh þe my wyf was slayn
 And to þe crowe he stert and þat anon
 And puld his white feþeres euerychoon 304
 And made him blak and raft him al his song
 And eek his speche and out at dore him slong
 vnto þe deuel which I him bytake
 And for þis cause ben alle crows blake 308
 Lordyngs by þis ensample I ȝow pray
 Beth war and takeþ kepe what ȝe say / [leaf 250, back]
 Ne tellith neuer man in al ȝoure lif
 how þat anoþer man haþ dight his wyf 312

he wol 3ou hatin mortelly certeyn
 Daun Salamon as wise clerkes seyn
 Techeþ a man to kepe his tonge wel
 But as I sayd. I am nought tixted wel 316
 But/ napeles þus taughte me my dame
 My sone thenk on þe crowe in goddes name
 My son keep wel þy tonge and kep þy frend
 A wicked tonge. is worse þan a feend 320
 My sone fro a feend men may hem blesse
 My sone god of his endeles goodnesse
 wallid a tonge wiþ teeþ and lippes eek
 For man schal him auyse what he speek 324
 My sone ful ofte for to mochil speche /
 haþ many a man be spilt as clerkes teche
 But for a litil speche auisily
 Is no man schent to speke generally 328
 My sone þy tonge scholdest þou restreigne
 At alle tyme but whan þou dost þy peyne /
 To speke of god in honour and prayere
 The firste vertu sone if þou wilt lere 332
 Is to restreigne and kepe wel þy tonge
 Thus lerne clerkes whan þat þay ben 3onge
 My sone of mochil speking euel auised
 Ther lasse speking had ynough suffised 336
 Comeþ mochil harm þus was me told and taught
 In mochel speche synne wantiþ nought
 wost wher of a racle tonge serueþ
 Right a sward for-kutteþ and kerueþ 340
 An arm a tuo my dere sone right so
 A tonge cutteth frendship al a tuo
 A iangler is to god abhominable
 Red Salamon so wys and honorable 344
 Red Dauid in his psalmes reed Senek
 My sone spek not. but wiþ þy heed þu bek
 Dissimul as þou were deed if þat þou heere
 A iangler speke of perilous mateere [leaf 251] 348

The flemyng^t saip and lere it if þe lest /
 That litil iangling causeþ mochil rest
 My sone if þou no wikked word hast sayd
 The thar not drede for to be bywrayd 352
 But he þat haþ mys sayd I dar wel sayn
 he may by no way clepe his word agayn
 Thing^t þat is sayd . is sayd . and forþ it goþ
 Though him repent or be him neuer so loþ 356
 He is his þral to whom þat/ he haþ sayd
 A tale of which he is now yuel a payd
 My sone be war and be noon auctour newe /
 Of tydyngs wheþer þay ben fals or trewe / 360
 wher-so þou comest amonges heih or lowe /
 kep wel þy tonge / and thenk^t vpon þe crowe
 ¶ Here endith þe tale of þe crowe

[*No break in the MS.*]

GROUP I. FRAGMENT X.

§ 1. THE BLANK-PARSON LINK.

¶ And here begynneth the prolōge of þe Persouns tale
By þat þe maunciple had had his tale endid
 The sonne fro þe south line is descendid
 So lowe þat it nas nouȝt to my sight
 Degrees [nyne and twenty as in high^t]¹ [¹ *In a later hand.*] 4
 Ten on þe Clokke it was as I gesse /
 For enleuen foote or litil more or lesse /
 My schadow was at þilk tyme of þe ȝere
 Of which feet as my lengþe parted were / 8
 In [sixe¹] feet equal of þe proporcioun
 Ther-with þe mones exaltacioun
 In mena libra alway gan ascende
 As we were entryng at a townes ende 12
 For which our host as he was wont to gye
 As in þis caas our ioly compaignye
 Sayd in þis wise lordings euerich oon
 Now lakkeþ vs no moo tales þan oon 16
 Fulfilled is my sentens and my decre
 I trowe þat we han herd of ech degre
 Almost fulfilled is myn ordynaunce
 I pray to god so ȝeue him right good chaunce 20
 That tellith to vs his tale lustily
 Sire prest quod he artow a vicory [*leaf 251, back*]
 Or artow a persoun say soþ by þy fay
 Be what þou be breke nouȝt oure play 24

For euery man saue þou hath told his tale
 vnboole and schew vs what is in þy male
 For trewely me þinkeþ by þy chier
 þou scholdist wel knyht vp a gret matier 28
 Tel vs a tale anoon for cokkes boones
 This persoun answerde al at oones /
 Thow getist fable noon I-told for me
 For poul þat writes vnto thimothe 32
 Repreueþ hem þat weyueþ sothfastnesse
 And tellen fables and such wrecchednesse /
 why schuld I sowen draht out of my fest/
 whan I may sowe whete if þat me lest/ 36
 For which I say if þat 3ow lust to hiere
 Morallite and vertuous matiere
 And þanne þat 3e wil 3iue me audience
 I wol ful fayn at cristis reuerence 40
 Do 3ow plesaunce leful as I can
 But trusteþ wel I am a suthern man
 I can not geste. rum raf. ruf by letter
 Ne god wot rym hold I but litel better 44
 And þerfor if 3ow lust I wol not glose
 I wol 3ow telle a mery tale in prose /
 To knyht vp al this fest and make an ende
 And Ihū for his grace wit me sende 48
 To schewe 3ow þe way in þis viage
 Of pilke parfyt glorious pilgrimage
 That hatte Ierusalem celestial
 And if 3e vouche sauf anoon I schal 52
 Bygynne my tale for which I 3ow pray
 Telle 3our avis I can no better say
 But napeles þis meditacioun
 I put it ay vnder correctioun 56
 Of clerkes for I am not textuel
 I take but þe sentens trustiþ wel
 Therfor I make protestacioun
 That I wol stonde to correccioun [leaf 252] 60

Vpon þis word we han assented soone
For as it semed it was for to done
To enden in som vertuous sentence
And for to ȝeue him space and audience 64
And bad oure host^t he schulde to him say
That^t alle we to telle his tale him pray
Our host^t hadde þe wordes for vs alle
Sir prest^t quod he now faire ȝow bifalle 68
Say what^t ȝow lust^t and we wil gladly hiere
And wiþ þat^t word he said in þis manere
Telleþ quod he ȝour meditacioun
But^t hasteth ȝow þe sonne wol a doun 72
Beþ fructuous and þat / in litil space
And to do wel[!] God sende ȝow grace /

[*No break in the MS.*]

(*The Page-numbers are those of the Six-Text.*)

THE PARSON'S TALE.

A TREATISE ON PENITENCE, IN 3 PARTS :

- Part I. On **Penitence**, and its 1st requisite **Contrition** (A) (p. 593—612).
 Part II. On its 2nd requisite, **Confession** (B) (p. 612—679).
 Part III. On its 3rd requisite, **Satisfaction** (C) (p. 679—684), with the Writer's Leave-taking and Retractations (p. 684-85).

PART I. (p. 593—612).

ON PENITENCE, AND ITS 1ST REQUISITE, CONTRITION.

Proem on Jeremiah vi. 16. The Tale is to be on *Penitence* as a full noble way to lead folk to Christ, and is to treat of

- i. 'what is Penitence' (p. 594).
- ii. 'whennes it is cleped Penitence'. [*not in the Tale.*]
- iii. 'in how many maneres been the acciouns or werkynge of Penitence' (p. 594-5).
- iv. 'how many speses ther been of Penitence' (p. 595).
- v. 'whiche thynges apertenen and bihouen to Penitence' (p. 595—682: nearly all Parts I and III, and all Part II).
- vi. 'whiche thynges destourben Penitence' (at end of Part III, p. 682) (p. 593).
- i. **Penitence** defined, by *a.* St Ambrose; *b.* 'som doctour'; *c.* the writer. Its requisites: 1. bewailing of sins; 2. purpose to have shrift, to do satisfaction, never to sin again, to continue in good works (p. 594).
- [ii. *not given.*]
- iii. The 3 actions of Penitence: 1. Baptism after sin; 2. not to do deadly sin after baptism; 3. not thus to do venial sin (p. 594-95).
- iv. The 3 speses or kinds of Penitence: 1. Solemn (to be put out of church, or do open penance); 2. Common (to go naked on pilgrimage); 3. Private (p. 595).
- v. The 3 necessities or requisites for Penitence (p. 596—682):
 - A. **Contrition of heart** (p. 596—612).
 - B. **Confession of mouth** (Part II, p. 612—679).
 - C. **Satisfaction** (Part III, p. 679—682).
 Penitence avails against 3 things, by which we wrath Christ (p. 595).
- A. **Contrition** is the root of Penitence, whose stem bears branches and leaves of Confession, and fruit of Satisfaction. Contrition also bears a seed of grace, whose heat draws men to God. (Simile of the child and his nurse's milk.)
 Penance is the tree of life (p. 596).
 Four Points to be known about Contrition:
 1. What it is; 2. the causes that move a man to it; 3. how to be contrite; 4. what it avails the soul (p. 597).
 2. The 6 Causes that should move a man to Contrition:
 - a. Remembrance of Sins (p. 597-8).
 - b. Whoso does sin is the Thrall of Sin (p. 598-99).
 - c. Dread of the Day of Doom and the Pains of Hell (p. 599—604).
 These described: the Doom (p. 599-600); Job's 'lond of myse and of derknesse' (p. 600-1); the 3 shames in hell against (1) 'Honours, (2) delices, and (3) riches' (p. 611); poverty in 4 things: no treasure, food, clothing, or friends (p. 602); and no delights of the 5 senses. The pain shall be eternal (p. 603). Hell is orderless (p. 603-4). The 7 causes why the damnd have lost all hope (p. 604).
 - d. Remembrance of the good works we've left undone, and the loss of the good works done while we were in sin (p. 604-6).
 Deadly sin wipes out all good works formerly done (p. 605); and no good works can be done in deadly sin (p. 605-6).
 The new French song, *J'ai tout perdu mon temps* (also quoted in Chaucer's late poem of *Fortune*).

- e. Remembrance of Christ's suffering for our sins (p. 606). In man's sin, every ordinance is turnd up-so-down (p. 607). For this disorder Christ sufferd (p. 608).
- f. The hope of 3 things: 1. Forgiveness of Sins, 2. the Gift of Grace to do well, 3. the Glory of Heaven (p. 609).
- 3. How to be contrite. Contrition must be universal and total: for sins of thought, for desires against God's law, for wicked words as well as wicked deeds (p. 610). Contrition must be angwishous and continual (p. 609-11).
- 4. How Contrition helps the soul. It sometimes delivers a man from sin; destroys the prison of hell; cleanses the soul; changes the son of Wrath to the son of Grace (p. 611-12).

PART II (*no. v. continued*).

B. CONFESSION (THE 2ND REQUISITE FOR PENITENCE) (p. 612—679).

- B. Confession. § 1. (l. 317) 'what is confession' (p. 612).
- § 2. 'wheither it oghte nedes be doon or noon' (p. 672-9).
- § 3. 'whiche thynges been couenable to verray Confession' (p. 674-79).

CONFESSION, § 1.

- 1. 'Confession is verray shewynge of synnes to the preest' (l. 318) (p. 612). We must understand too
 - a. (l. 321) 'whennes that synnes spryngen' (p. 612—15).
 - b. 'how they encreessen' (p. 615-16; 672-74).
 - c. 'whiche they been' (p. 616--672).
- 1.a. Sin sprang from the fall of Adam (p. 612). The legend of Adam and Eve told (p. 613). From Adam we took Original Sin, and were born sons of eternal damnation; but Baptism rescues us; though we keep liability to temptation, or Concupiscence (p. 613-14).
Concupiscence, or the nourishing and occasion of sin. St Paul and St Jerome's temptations (p. 614-15).
- 1.b. How Sin grows in a man. 1. by Concupiscence; 2. Subjection to the Devil; 3. Hesitation; 4. Doing, the Sin becoming Actual (p. 615-16).
- 1.c. Sin is *a.* venial, *β.* deadly (or mortal).
 - a. 1. Venial Sin defined. It skips into Deadly Sin. (Simile of the drops of water into a vessel's hold drowning the ship;) (p. 616).
 - β. 1. Deadly Sin defined (p. 617).
 - a. 2. Of divers small venial sins, hardly thought sins (p. 617-18); eating, drinking, talking, too much; using your wife too much; not visiting the sick (p. 617); talking vanities at church, &c. (p. 618). Cure of venial sins by love to Christ, prayer, confession, good works, receiving the Sacrament, holy-water, &c. (p. 618).
- 1.c. β. 2. *The Seven Deadly Sins*. The Chieftains, head and spring, of all other Sins (p. 619).
 - i. Pride (p. 619-26), and its Remedy (p. 626-8).
 - ii. Envy (p. 628-30), and its Remedy (p. 630-1).
 - iii. Ire or Anger (p. 631-42), and its Remedy (p. 642-5).
 - iv. Accidie or Sloth (Discontent, Ennui) (p. 645-49), and its Remedy (p. 650-1).
 - v. Avarice or Covetousness (p. 651-7), and its Remedy (p. 657-8).
 - vi. Gluttony (p. 658-9), and its Remedy (p. 660).
 - vii. Lechery (p. 660-8), and its Remedy (p. 668-72).
- i. PRIDE (p. 619—626). Its 16 (and more) Twigs. 1. Disobedience, 2. Boasting, 3. Hypocrisy, 4. Despite, 5. Arrogance (p. 619), 6. Impudence, 7. Swelling of Heart (rejoicing in harm done), 8. Insolence, 9. Elation, 10. Impatience, 11. Contumacy, 12.

- Presumption, 13. Irreverence, 14. Pertinacity, 15. Vain-glory, 16. Jangling (chattering).
- A private kind of pride (the Host's Wife's and Wife of Bath's¹), wanting to go to offering first, &c. (p. 620).
- Two kinds of Pride, *a*. 'within man's heart', *b*. without; *b*. being the sign of *a*., 'as the gaye leafsel atte Taverne is sign of the wyn that is in the Celer'² (p. 620-21), *b*. outside pride.
- a*. in dear clothing, 1. superfluity of it: its cost, furring, chisel-holes, dragging in the dung, waste of material (p. 621), unfitness for giving to the poor: 2. scantness of it: showing men's privy members, and buttocks (like a she-ape's rump), and the former as half-flayed, in parti-coloured hose³. The 'outrageous array of Women' (p. 623).
- β*. in horses (p. 623), and vicious grooms to tend 'em; plate-harness, &c.
- γ*. in household: keeping too many retainers or servants, who oppress the poor (p. 624).
- δ*. in table: not asking the poor to feasts; having burning and ornamented dishes⁴; too costly cups, &c., and too choice minstrelsy (p. 624).
- What Pride sins are deadly, and what venial (p. 624).
- The Sources of Pride (p. 624): goods of Nature, Fortune, Grace (p. 624). The Folly of Pride in any of these goods of Nature: 'we ben alle of o fader and of o mooder, and . . of o nature'⁵. The general signs of *Gentleness*. (The flies call'd 'bees', and their stingless king) (p. 625); 3 gifts of Grace; 3 of Fortune. The brittleness of popular praise⁶ (p. 626).
- The Remedy against Pride.*
- Humility or Meekness, and its 3 kinds: in 1. heart, 2. mouth, 3. works. 4 kinds of each of these (p. 626-27).
- ii. ENVY (p. 627-30): defined by the Philosopher and St Augustine. It springs from Malice (p. 627).
- Malice; 2 kinds of: 1. hardness of heart, or recklessness; 2. opposing truth (p. 627).
- The 2 kinds of Envy (p. 628): 1. sorrow at other men's prosperity; 2. joy at other men's harm: whence comes
- Backbiting; 5 kinds (p. 628): 1. praise with a *but* at the end; 2. turning well-meant things upside down to ill ones; 3. lessening a neighbour's goodness; 4. putting one man above another; 5. glad listening to scandal (p. 628).
- Grudging or murmuring (p. 628): 1. against God (p. 629); 2. Murmuring from avarice, 3. from pride, 4. from envy; 5. among Servants, who say 'the Devil's *Paternoster*'; 6. Murmuring from ire or hate: thence, *a*. Bitterness of Heart, *b*. Discord, *c*. Scorning; *d*. Accusing (p. 629); *e*. Malignity (p. 630).
- The Remedy against Envy* (p. 630-31).
- Love of God and one's neighbour. How a man shall love his neighbour. How an enemy is included in the name 'neighbour' (p. 630). 3 Remedies of Love, against 3 deeds of Hate (p. 631). Love is the medicine that casts out the venom of Envy from man's heart (p. 631).
- iii. IRE or ANGER (p. 631-42), and its 2 kinds: *a*. good Ire or Wrath (p. 632); *b*. wicked Ire, and its 2 kinds: sudden ire, and ire of malice aforethought (p. 632-33).
- Three Shrews that forge in the Devil's furnace: Pride, Envy, and Contumely (p. 633).

¹ Melibe-Monk Link, B. § 11; and General Prologue, A.

² Chaucer's father no doubt had a sign outside his wine-shop or tavern in Thames Street, London.

³ The outspoken and somewhat coarse abuse of the new fashions in dress is a great change from Chaucer's admirable Third-Period chaff of the moral short-comings of the monks and friars, &c., in the Prologue and middle Tales. If this is not change of man, it's change of mood.

⁴ Chaucer must have seen plenty of these when he was page, valet, and squire.

⁵ Compare Chaucer's *Gentleness*, &c. ⁶ Compare Clerk's Tale, Part VI, st. 135.

Wrath takes away a man's wit and spiritual life (p. 634).

Fruits of Wrath: 1. Hate. 2. War and wrong. 3. Mauslaughter, *a.* spiritual; *b.* bodily (p. 634).

a. The 3 kinds of spiritual Manslaughter (3, calld 6 in MSS. p. 634): 1. by Hate. 2. by Backbiting. 3. Giving wicked Counsel, by Fraud (p. 634).

b. bodily Manslaughter: slaying with your tongue, giving orders or counsel to slay a man (p. 634).

Manslaughter in deed: its 4 (that is, 7) kinds (p. 635): 1. by law: *a.* Justice condemning a man to death; 2. justifiable homicide, in defence of one's own life; 3. by misadventure: shooting an arrow, &c.; 4. a woman overlying her child; 5. a man making a woman barren by drinks, &c., killing the foetus within her, shedding his seed in the wrong place; a woman killing the child in her womb; 6. a woman killing her child (after birth) for shame; 7. a man by lechery or blows killing a foetus.

(Sixteen) other sins coming from Ire or Anger.

1. blaming or despising God, as hazarders do (Cp. *Pardoner's Tale*) (p. 635); and those who treat of the Sacrament of the altar irreverently (p. 636).

2. Attry anger: making angry false excuses for sin.

3. Swearing, which dismembers Christ (p. 636).

a. Of lawful Swearing, before a Judge: its 3 conditions, and its motives; *b.* God's name and Christ's, not to be taken in vain (p. 637); *c.* swearing for gentility or manliness (p. 638); *d.* swearing suddenly; *e.* of Adjuration and Conjuraton by enchanter and necromancers; *f.* of Divination by Dreams, &c.; *g.* of Charms for Wounds and Maladies (p. 638).

4. Lying (p. 638), and its 6 kinds.

5. Flattering. How Flatterers are the Devil's Nurses, his Enchanters and Chaplains (p. 639).

6. Cursing that comes of irous heart: Malison.

7. Chiding and Reproach (p. 640); (specially a chiding wife¹) (p. 640-41).

8. Scorning (p. 641).

9. Giving wicked Counsel (p. 641).

10. Sowing and making Discord (p. 642).

11. Double tongue (p. 642).

12. Betraying of Counsel (p. 642).

13. Menace.

14. Idle words.

15. Jangling (chattering) (p. 642).

16. Japing (joking) (p. 642-43).

The Remedy against Anger (p. 643-5). Debonairtee and Patience (p. 643). Four kinds of grievances, and their remedies: 1. wicked words, 2. loss of goods, 3. harm of body, 4. outrageous labour (p. 644).

Incentives to Patience. Story of the Philosopher and Child (p. 644-45). Obedience comes from Patience (p. 645).

iv. ACCIDIE, or SLOTH (Discontent, Ennui) (p. 645-49), is an enemy to the 3 states of man,—1. innocence (p. 645), 2. prayer (p. 646), 3. grace;—and to one's livelihood. Its 12 bad consequences (p. 646): 1. Sloth (and its remedy); 2. Dread to begin good works (p. 646); 3. Wanhope, or Despair (and its Remedy) (p. 647); 4. Somnolence (p. 648), and 5. Negligence, or 6. Recklessness, and the Remedy for each; 7. Idleness; 8. *Tarditas*, or tarrying before turning to God (p. 649); 9. Lachesse, or giving up a good work begun; 10. Coldness; 11. Undevotion; 12. Worldly sorrow (p. 649).

The Remedy against Accidie (p. 650-51): Fortitude or Strength, and its 5 kinds. 1. Magnanimity² or great Courage; 2. Faith or Hope; 3. Assurance; 4. Magnificence; 5. Constancy (p. 651).

¹ Does Chaucer here refer to his former wife?

² Miswritten 'Magnificence' in Ellesmere and Lansdowne MSS.

- v. **AVARICE** (p. 651-57). The difference between Avarice and Covetousness (p. 651); and between an Idolater and an avaricious man (p. 652). Of Covetousness, and lords' extortion from their bondmen: "humble folk been Cristes freendes" (p. 652-53). The Duty of lords to their thralls or churls. Of those that pillage Holy Church (p. 653-54); lords who plunder the poor are like wolves (p. 654). Of Deceit between Merchant and Merchant (p. 654). Of honest bodily Merchandise (the surplus of one country may be sent to help another) (p. 654). Of spiritual Merchandise, or Simony, and its 2 kinds (p. 655),—thieves that steal Christ's souls get livings (p. 655-56);—Hasardry or Games of Chance (p. 656). Other outcomes of Avarice (p. 656): 1. Lying, 2. Theft (bodily and spiritual) (p. 656-57), 3. False Witness, 4. False Oaths (p. 657).

The Remedy against Avarice (p. 657): Mercy and Pity, and reasonable Liberality (p. 658). Of foolish largess (p. 658).

- vi. **GLUTTONY** (p. 658-59), and its 5 kinds (p. 659): 1. Drunkenness, or the burial of man's reason; 2. a troubled spirit; 3. bad way of eating; 4. distemperd bodily humours; 5. forgetfulness. Or, as St Gregory says, 1. eating too soon; 2. eating too delicate food; 3. taking too much; 4. troubling too much about cooking food; 5. eating greedily: these are the 5 fingers of the devil's hand (p. 659).

The Remedy against Gluttony (p. 660): Abstinence, and its fellows. Temperance, Shame, Content with plain food, Moderation, Sobriety, Sparing (p. 660).

- vii. **LECHERY** (p. 660). Its punishment in the Old Testament (p. 660). Adultery, and the desire of it (p. 661-62).

The 5 fingers of the Devil's other hand (p. 662): 1. foolish looking; 2. villainous touching; 3. foul words; 4. kissing (old dotards, and dry dogs at a rose-tree (p. 662); and how a man should love his wife); 5. the stinking deed of lechery (p. 663). Its kinds: 1. Fornication. Taking a maid's maidenhead, or 100th fruit (p. 663). 2. Adultery, defined. 3. Harms following from it: *a.* breaking of faith; *b.* theft (of the wife's body from her husband (Joseph and Potiphar's wife), and of her soul from Christ); *c.* breaking God's commandment, and defouling Christ (p. 664). Of Harlots and Bawds (p. 665). Adultery is set between Theft and Manslaughter. More kinds of Adultery: 1. by Men bound by Religious Vows, &c.; 2. those in Holy Orders (p. 665). Lecherous Priests are like a free Bull in a town, and they eat raw flesh of folk's wives and daughters (p. 666); 3. by man and wife copulating for pleasure only (p. 667); 4. copulation with kinsfolk, spiritual (or godchildren) or fleshly (blood relations). 5. the abominable unmentionable sin; 6. Pollution, of 3 kinds: 1. too rank humours; 2. weakness (p. 667); 3. evil thoughts (p. 668).

The Remedy for Lechery (p. 668): I. Chastity and Continence.

1. in Marriage. (The true effect of Marriage. One husband to have one wife (p. 668). How a man should behave to his wife (p. 669). How the wife should be subject to her husband (p. 669), and be moderate in behaviour, discreet in words, &c. (p. 669-70). The 3 causes for which man and wife may copulate (p. 670): *a.* begetting of children; *b.* to pay the mutual debt of their bodies; *c.* to avoid lechery (p. 670). The 4th cause, pleasure, is deadly sin (p. 670-71).)

2. In Widowhood; 3. Virginity (p. 671).

II. Special avoidance of causes of lechery: *a.* eating and drinking; long sleeping; *b.* the person who'd tempt you (p. 671-72). (I wish I could tell you the Ten Commandments; but it's too high doctrine (p. 672).) [End of *Confession*, § 1, c.]

Sin is in heart, mouth, deed, by the 5 Wits (p. 672).

§ 1. *b.* (see p. 615-16.) The 7 Circumstances that encrease or aggravate sins (p. 672). 1. the person who sins (male or female, &c.); 2. the kind of sin (fornication or homicide); 3. the place it was committed in (as in a church, by a priest) (p. 673); 4. for what motive; 5. the number of times it was committed; 6. by what temptation; 7. how it was committed; and all other circumstances (p. 674).

CONFESSION, § 2, § 3 (p. 674-79).

Profitable Confession, and its 4 (= 3) Conditions (p. 674):

1. sorrowful bitterness of heart (p. 674); its 5 signs: *a.* shamefastness (like the Publican's) (p. 675); *b.* humility; *c.* fulness of tears (p. 675); *d.* no hesitation (like the Magdalen) for shame; *e.* obedience to receive penance laid on you (p. 675).
2. speedy Confession (p. 676); its 4 Conditions: *f.* that it be well thought over; *g.* the greatness and number of sins must be understood; *h.* the sinner must be contrite, and *i.* avoid occasions of sins.
3. Shrift must be made to one man, not more (p. 676).

True Shrift, and its 10 Conditions (p. 677): 1. that it be of free will; 2. that it be lawful (both sinner and priest, Popish); 3. that it be not despairing of Christ's mercy; 4. that a man accuse himself only, and not another; 5. that it be not lying (accusing oneself of sins never committed) (p. 678); that it be by one's own mouth, and not by letter; 7. that the sin be not painted with fair words; 8. that the shrift be to a discreet priest; 9. that the shrift be not made for vain-glory, but for fear of Christ; 10. that the shrift be not made suddenly, for a joke (p. 678). You may be shriven more than once for the same sin; and should be houseld once a year (p. 679).

PART III (*no. v. continued, and no. vi.*).

SATISFACTION (THE 3RD REQUISITE FOR PENITENCE)
(p. 679-684).

In *a.* Alms. *β.* bodily punishment.

- a.* *Alms and its three kinds* (p. 679): 1. Contrition of heart. 2. Pity for one's neighbour's faults. 3. Giving good counsel to other's souls and bodies (food, visits in prison, burial). These Alms should be done privily, if possible (p. 680).
- β.* *Bodily Punishment (Penance), of 4 kinds*: 1. Prayers (chiefly of the Paternoster, whose expounding I leave to Masters of Theology) (p. 680). 2. Watching, and its 3 kinds: forbearing, *a.* meat and drink, *b.* worldly jollity, and *c.* deadly sin (p. 681). 3. Fasting, and its 4 kinds: Liberality to poor folk; spiritual gladness of heart; not grudging at fasting; reasonable eating. 4. Virtuous teachings, or Discipline: *a.* by word, writing, or example; *b.* by wearing hairshirts, &c., next your skin, scourging yourself, taking evils and injuries patiently (p. 682). [End of *no. v.* in Part i; p. 593.]

vi. The 4 Things that disturb Penance [*no. vi.* or last §, of p. 593 at foot] (p. 682). 1. Dread, and its remedy. 2. Shame, and its remedy. 3. Hope: *a.* of long life, and *b.* consequent overconfidence in Christ's mercy (p. 683). 4. Wanhope, or Despair of Mercy; its 3 kinds: *x.* from great and long continued sin; *y.* from falls-back into sin; *z.* from not being able to persevere in goodness (p. 683).

The fruit of Penance (p. 683-4).

EPILOGUE.

The Author's Leave-taking, and Lament over, and Withdrawal of, his Sinful Books, &c. (p. 684-85).

[*There are no paragraph-breaks or line-numbers in the MS., but Tyrwhitt's breaks are kept in the print for convenience sake.*]

¶ Ier. 6°. State *super* vias & videte et interrogate de semitis antiquis que sit via bona et ambulate in ea et inuenietis ¶ refrigerium animabus vestris, &c.

[75]

O wre swete lord god of heuen þat no man wil perische but wol þat we comen alle to þe knowleche of him and to þe blisful lif þat is perdurable / [76] ammonestith vs by þe prophet Ieremye þat saith in þis wise [77] ¶ Stondeth vpon þe weyes and seep & axep of olde pathes þat is to sayn of old sentence which is þe good way. [78] [. . . *no gap in the MS.*] and 3e schul fynde refresshyng for 3oure soules &c. [79] ¶ Many ben þe wayes espirituels þat leden folk to oure lord Ihū *crist*/. and to þe regne of glorie. [80] Of whiche weyes þer is a ful noble way and ful couenable which may not faile to man ne to womman þat þorugh synne hap mysgon fro þe right way of Ierusalem celestial [81] and þis wey is cleped penitence ¶ Of which men schulden gladly herken and enquere wiþ al here herte [82] to wyte what is penitence and whens it is cleped penitence and in what maner and in how many maners been þe acciones or workynges of penaunce [83] and how many spieces ben of penitences & whiche þinges apperteynen and byhouen to penitence. and whiche þinges destourben penitence

[84] ¶ Seint ambrose saip. þat' penitence is þe pleynyng ¹of man for þe gult' þat' he haþ doon. and no more to do ony þing' for which him oughte to pleigne [85] ¶ And som doctour saith. penitence is wayment-yunye of man þat' sorweþ for his synne and peyneþ himself' for he haþ mysdoon [86] ¶ Penitence wip certeyn *circumstaunces* is verray repentaunce of man þat holt' himself' in sorwe and in woo for his giltes [87] ¶ And for he schal be verray penitent' he schal first/ bywaile þe synnes þat' he haþ do and stedfastly *purposen* in his hert to hauen schrifte of mouth. and to doon satisfaccioun [88] and neuer to do þing' for which him oughte more to bywayle or to *complayne*. and to continue in goode werkes or elles his repentaunce may nouzt' auayle [89] For as saith seint Isidre ¶ he is a iapere and a gabbere and no verray repentaunt' þat' eft' soone dop þing' for which him oughte to repente' [90] wepynge. and nouzt' for to stynte to doon synne may nouzt' auayle [91] ¶ But napeles men schal hope þat' at' euery tyme þat men fallith. be it' neuer so ofte' þat' he may arise þorugh penitence if' he haue *grace* ¶ But' certeyn it is a gret doute. [92] For as saith seint Gregory. Vnneþe arist' he out of his synne þat is charged wip þe charge of yuel vsage [93] ¶ And þefore repentaunt folk' þat' stinte for to synne and forlete synne er þat synne forlete hem. holy chirche holt' hem siker of her sauacioun. [94] And he þat synneth and verraily repentith him in his last' ende' holy chirche 3it hopeþ his sauacioun by þe grete mercy of oure lord ihū crist' for his repentaunce. but' take þe siker way

[95] ¶ And now siþ þat' I haue declared 3ow what þing' is penitence. now schul 3e vnderstonde þat' þer ben þre acciouns of penitence [96] ¶ The first' is þat' if' a man be baptized after þat' he haþ synned. [97] Seint augustyn saith but if' he be penitent' for his olde synful lif' he may not' bygynne þe newe

clene lif [98] ¶ For certes if he be baptized wipoute penitence of his olde gilt. he receyueth þe mark of baptisme: but nouȝt þe grace ne þe remissioun of his synnes til he haue repentaunce verray [99] ¶ Anoper defaute is þis þat men doon deedly synne after þat þay haue receyued baptisme [100] ¶ þe þridde defaute is þat men fallen in to venial synne after here baptisme fro day to day. [101] þer of saip seint austyn ¶ That penitence of goode men and of humble ¹folk is þe penitens of euery day

[102] ¶ The spices of penitence ben thre ¶ That oon of hem is solempne ¶ Anoper is comune ¶ And þe þridde is pryue [103] ¶ Thilke penaunce þat is solempne is in tuo maners as is to be put out of holy chirche in lente for slaughtre of childre and such maner þing [104] ¶ Anoper is whan a man haþ synned openly. of which synne þe fame is openly spoken in þe contre. and þanne holy chirche by iugement streyneth him to doon open penaunce [105] ¶ Comune penaunce is þat prestes enioyuen men comunly in certeyn caas. as for to goon *per* aduenture naked in pilgrimage or barfot [106] ¶ Priue penaunce is þilk þat men doon alday for priue synnes of whiche we schryue vs priuely and receyuen priue penaunce

[107] ¶ Now schalt þou vnderstonde what bihoueth and is necessarie to verray *parfyt* penitence. and þis stondith in þre þinges [108] ¶ Contricioun of hert ¶ Confessioun of mouth ¶ And satisfaccion. [109] ¶ For whiche saith seint Iohan Crisostom ¶ penitence distreyneth a man to accepte benignely euery peyne þat him is enioyned with contricioun of herte and schrift of mouth with satisfacioun and in werking of alle maner humblete [110] and þis is fruytful penitence. agayn þre þinges in whiche we wrappe our lord ihū *crist*/. [111] þis is to sayn by delit in þinking ¶ By rechelesnes in speking ¶ By wicked synful werkyng [112] ¶ Again þese

þre wickid gultes is penitence þat may be likned vnto a tre

[113] ¶ The roote of þis tre is contricioun þat hydiþ him in þe hert/ of him þat is verray repentaunt ¶ Right as þe roote of a tree hideþ him in þe eorþe. [114] of þe roote of contricioun springeth a stalk þat bereth braunches and leeuës of confessioun and fruyt of satisfaccioun [115] ¶ For whiche crist saith in his gospel ¶ Doth digne fruyt of penitence. For by þis fruyt may men knowe þis tree and nouzt by þe roote þat is hyd in þe hert of a man ne by þe braunches ne the leuys of confessioun [116] ¶ And þerfore oure lord ihū crist saiþ þus ¶ By þe fruyt of hem schul ȝe knowe hem [117] ¶ Of þis roote eek springeþ a seed of grace. þe which seed is mooder of sikurnes ¶ And þis seed is egre and hoot [118] ¶ The grace of þis seed springeth of god þorugh remembraunce of þe day of doom and of þe peynes of helle [119] ¶ Of þis matier saith Salomon þat in þe drede of god man forleteth his synne [120] ¹¶ The hete of þis seed is þe loue of god & þe desiring of þe ioie perdurable [121] ¶ þis hete draweth þe hert of man to god and doþ him hate his synne [122] ¶ For soþe þer is no þing þat serueþ so wel to a child as þe mylk of his norice ¶ Ne no þing is to him more abhominable þan þe milk whan it is melled mete. [123] ¶ Right so þe synful man þat loueþ his synne. him semeth it is to him most swete of eny þing [124] ¶ But fro þat tyme he loueþ sadly oure lord ihū crist and desireþ þe lif perdurable. þer nys to him no þing more abhominable / [125] for
Dilexi legem tuam
&c.
soþly þe lawe of god is þe loue of god ¶ For which Dauyd saith ¶ I haue loued þy lawe and hated wikkednesse and hate ¶ he þat loueþ god kepeth his lawe and his word [126] ¶ This tree saugh the prophete daniel in spirit vpon þe auysioun of Nabugodonosor whan he counseiled him to do penaunce. [127] ¶ Penaunce is tre of lif to hem þat it receyuen and þat holdeth him

in verray penitence is blessed after þe sentence of Salomon

[128] In þis penitence or contricioun¹ men schal vnderstonde foure þinges that is to sayn what is contricioun and whiche ben þe causes þat^t moeuen men to contricioun and how he schulde be contrit and what^t contricioun auaieth to þe soule [129] ¶ þanne it is þus þat contricioun is þe verray sorwe þat^t a man receyueþ in his herte for his synnes wiþ sad purpos to schryue him and to doo penaunce and neuer more to don synne. [130] ¶ And þis sorwe schal be in þis maner as saith seint Bernad ¶ It^t schal ben heuy and greuous and ful scharp and poynant in herte [131] ¶ First^t for man haþ agilted his lord and his creatour and more scharp and poynant^t. For he haþ agiltid his fader celestial. [132] and 3it^t more scharp and poynant for he haþ wratthed and agilt^t him þat^t bouzt^t him wiþ his precious blood and haþ delyuered vs fro þe bondes of synne and fro þe cruelte of þe deuel and fro þe peynes of helle //

[133] ¶ þe causes þat^t oughten to moeue a man to contricioun ben .vj. ¶ First^t a man schal remembre him of his synnes. [134] but loke þat^t þilke remembrance be to no delyt^t of him by no way but^t gret^t schame and sorwe for his gilt^t. For Iob. saith þat synful men doon werkes worþy of confessioun [135] and þerfor saith Ezechiel ¶ I wol remembre alle þe 3eres of my lyf in bitternesse of myn hert^t. [136] and god saith in thapocalips. ¹Remembre 3ow from whens þat^t 3e ben falle. For biforn þat^t tyme þat^t 3e synned. 3e were þe children of god [. *no gap*] [137] ¶ But for 3oure synne 3e be woxe þral and foul and membres of þe feend. hate of aungels. sclaunder of holy chirche & foode of þe fals serpent. perpetual matier of þe fuyr of helle [138] ¶ and 3et^t more foule and abhominable For 3e trespassen so ofte tyme as doþ þe hound þat^t torneþ to ete his spewyng^t. [139] & 3et

¶ Sex sunt cause
que mouent
hominez ad con-
tricionem

3e ben fouler for 3oure longe continuyng^t in synne and 3oure synful vsage. for whiche 3e ben roten in 3oure synne as a beest^t in his donge [140] ¶ Suche maner of þoughtes make a man haue schame of^t his synne and no delit. and god saiþ by þe prophete Izechiel [141] ¶ 3e schul remembre 3ow of 3oure weyes. & pay schal displese 3ow soply ¶ Synnes ben þe way þat leden folk^t to helle

[142] ¶ The secounde cause þat^t oughte make a man to haue desdeyn of^t his synne is þis. þat^t as seiþ seint petre / ¶ who so doth synne is þral of^t synne. and synne put a man in gret^t þraldom. [143] and þefore saith þe prophete. Ezechiel. I wente sorwful in desdeyn of^t myself ¶ Certes wel oughte a man haue desdeyn of^t synne and wiþdrawe him fro þat^t þraldom and vilonye. [144] and lo what^t saiþ Seneca. in þis matiere. he saiþ þus ¶ Though I wiste þat^t god nere god. man schulde neuer knowe it: 3it^t wold I haue disdeyn for to do synne [145] and þe same Seneca also saith ¶ I am born to gretter þinges þan to be þral to my body or þan for to make of^t my body a þral [146] ¶ Ne a fouler þral may no man ne womman make of^t his body þan 3iue his body to synne [147] ¶ And were it^t þe foulest^t cherl or þe foulest^t womman þat^t lyueþ and lest^t of^t value: 3et^t is þanne synne more foul and more in seruitute [148] Euer fro þe heigher dege þat^t man falliþ þe more he is þral and more to god vile and abhominable [149] ¶ O goode god wel oughte a man haue gret disdayn o such a þing^t þat^t þorough synne þer he was free now is he makid bonde. [150] an þefore saiþ seint austyn ¶ If þou hast^t disdayn [. . . no gap] þat^t þou þiself^t schuldest^t doon synne: haue þou þanne desdeyn þat^t þou þiself^t schuldist^t do synne. [151] tak^t reward of^t þy value þat^t þou be nou3t^t to foul in þiself^t [152] Allas wel oughte men haue disdeyn to be

seruauntes & *þralles* to synne. & sore ben aschamed of hemself [153] *þat* god of his endeles ¹*goodnes* hap set hem in heigh estate or ȝeuen hem witte. strengþ of body. hele. beaute. *prosperite*. [154] and bouȝht hem fro þe deþ wiþ his herte blood *þat* þay so vnkyndely aȝeinst his gentilesce quyten so vileynsly to slauȝter of her ouȝhne soules [155] ¶ O goode god ȝe wommen *þat* ben of so gret beaute remembreþ ȝow of þe prouerbe of Salamon *þat* saith. [156] he likeneth a fair womman *þat* is a fool of hir body. to a ryng^t of gold *þat* were in þe groyn of a sowe [157] ¶ For riȝht as a sowe wroteþ in euerich ordure: so wrootith sche hir beaute in stynkyng^t ordure of synne

[158] ¶ The þridde cause *þat* ouȝte moeue a man to contricioun is drede of þe day of doome. & of þe horrible peynes of helle [159] ¶ For as seint Ierom saith. At euery tyme *þat* I remembre of þe day of doom: I quake [160] ¶ For whan I ete or drinke or what so *þat* I doo euer semeth me *þat* þe trompe sowneþ in myn eere. [161] Riseth ȝe vp *þat* ben deede / and comeþ to þe Iuggement [162] ¶ O goode god. mochil ouȝht a man to drede such a iuggement. þer as we schul be alle as seiþ seint poul Biforn þe sete of our lord ihū crist [163] wher as he schal make a general congregacioun wher as no man may ben absent. [164] for certes þer auayleþ non essoyne ne excusacioun [165] ¶ And nouȝt oonly *þat* oure defaute schal be [. , no gap] openly knowen. [166] and as seint Bernard saiþ ¶ Ther schal no pleynnyng^t auayle ne no sleight ¶ we schuln ȝiue rekenyng^t of euery ydel word [167] ¶ Ther schulle we haue a Iuge *þat* may nouȝt be disceyued ne corrupt. and why? For certes alle oure þoughtes ben descouered as to him ne for prayer ne for meede he nyl not / be corrupt [168] ¶ And þerfor saiþ Salamon ¶ The wrappe of god ne wol not be corrupt ¶ And þerfor saiþ Salomon ¶ The wrap of

god ne wol nouȝt spare no wight for praier ne for ȝifte ¶ And
 þerfore at þe day of doome þer is noon hope to eschape
 [169] wherfor as seint anselm seiþ ¶ Ful greet
 angusch schuln þe synful folk haue at þat tyme
 [170] ¶ þere schal þe sterne and þe wroþ Iugge sitte aboue
 and vnder him þe horrible put of helle open to de-
 stroye him þat mot byknowe his synnes which
 synnes openly ben schewed byforn god and biforn
 euery creature [171] ¶ and on þe lift syde mo deuelis
 þan herte may þynke for to hary and to drawe
 þe synful to pyne of helle [172] ¶ And wip-
 inne þe hertes of folk schal be þe bytyng ¹conscience
 and wipoute forþ schal be þe world al brennyng
 [173] ¶ whider schal þanne þe wrecche synful man. Fle-
 to hyden him: Certes he may not hyde him. he moot
 come forþ and schewe him [174] ¶ For certes as seith
 seynt Ierom ¶ The erþe schal caste him out/ of him
 and þe see also and þe aer also þat schal be ful of
 þunder-clappes and lightnynges [175] ¶ Now sobly
 who-so wel remembrith him of þese tydynges: I gesse
 his synne schal not torne him to delit but/ to gret
 sorw for drede of þe peyne of helle. [176] and þer-
 fore saiþ Iob. to god ¶ Suffre lord þat I may a while
 biwayle and wepe or I go wip oute retournynge to þe
 derk lond couered wip derknes of dep [177]
 to þe lond of mysese and of derknesse wher as is þe
 schadow of deth. wher as is noon order [ne]
 ordinaznce but grislich drede þat euer schal last [178]
 ¶ loo her may ȝe see þat Iob prayde respit a while
 to wepe and biwayle his trespas ¶ For forsoþe oon day of
 respit is bettre þan al þe tresor in þis world. [179] and
 for as moche as a man may aquyte himself byforn god
 by penaunce in þis world and not by tresor: þerfore
 schuld he praye to god ȝiue him respit a while to
 wepe and to waile his trespas. [180] for certes al
 [. no gap]

þe world nys but^t a litel þing^t at^t regard of^t þe sorwe
of^t helle [181] ¶ The cause why þat Iob. calleþ helle
þe lond of^t derknes^t [182] vnderstondith þat^t he
clepith it lond or eorþe for it is stable and neuer schal
fayle. derk^t for he þat^t is in helle hat default/ of^t
light^t material. [183] for certes þe derke light^t þat^t schal
come out^t of^t þe fuyr þat^t euer schal brenne / schal torne
him to payne þat^t is in helle for it schewiþ him to
þorrible deueles þat^t him tormenten [184] couered wiþ
the derknes of^t deth þat^t is to sayn þat^t he þat is in
helle schal haue defeaute of^t þe sight^t of^t god ¶ For certes
þe sight^t of^t god is þe lif^t perdurable. [185] þe derk-
nes of^t deth ben þe synnes þat^t þe wrecchid man
haþ doon whiche þat^t stourben him to see þe face
of^t god right^t as a derk^t cloude doþ bitwixe vs and þe
sonne [186] ¶ lond of^t myseyse^t By cause þat þere ben
þre maner of^t defautes agains þre þinges þat^t folk^t
of^t þis world han in þis present lif^t þat^t is to sayn.
honours. delices. and riches [187] ¶ Agayns honours.
han þey in helle / schame and confusioun. [188] For wel 3e
witen þat^t men clepyn honure þe reuerence þat^t men
doon to þe man. but^t in helle is ¹noon honour ne reuerence.
for certes no more reuerence schal ben doon to a
kyng^t þan to a knaue [189] ¶ For which god saiþ by
þe prophete Ieremie ¶ Thilke folk/ þat^t me displezen schul
be despit [190] ¶ Honour is eke cleped gret lord-
schipe. þere schal no wight *seruen* opir but^t of^t harm and
of^t torment ¶ honour eek^t is cleped gret dignite and heigh-
nes^t but^t in helle schulle þay be al fortrode of^t deueles
[191] ¶ And god saith. horrible deueles schuln goon and
comen vpon þe heedes of^t dampned folk^t. And þis
is for als moche as þe heyher þat þay were in þis present
lif^t þe more schuln þay ben abatid and defouled in
helle [192] ¶ Agayns riches of^t þis world schuln
þay han myse of^t pouert. A þis pouert^t schal be
in .iiij. þinges [193] In default^t of^t tresor of^t which as

dauid saith ¶ The riche folk^t þat^t embraseden and onedin
in al here herte þe tresor of^t þis world. schuln slepen in þe
slepyng^t of^t deth and no þing^t schuln þay fynde in
her hondes of^t al her tresor [194] ¶ & more-ouer þe
mysease of^t helle schal be in þe defaut of^t mete and
drink^t. [195] For god saith þus by moyses ¶ Thay schul
be wasted by hunger and þe briddes of^t helle schuln
deuoure hem wiþ bittir teeth and þe galle of^t þe
dragoun schal be her drink^t & þe venym of^t þe
dragoun here morsels [196] ¶ And forþer more ouer her
misease schal be in defaut of^t cloping/ for þay schul be naked
in body as of^t cloping ¶ For þay schuln be nakid of^t body
saue of^t fuyr in which þay brenne and oþer filþis. [197] and
naked schuln þay be of^t soule. of^t alle maner vertues which
þat is cloping^t of^t soule ¶ wher ben þanne þe gaye
robes. and þe softe scheetis and þe smale schirtes. [198]
lo what^t saiþ of^t hem þe prophete Isaye
¶ vnder hem schuln be strawed motthis and here
couertours schuln ben of^t wormes of^t helle [199] ¶ And
forþer mor ouer here disease schal be in defeaute of^t
frendes. for he is not pouere that haþ goode frendes.
but^t here is no frend. [200] For neyþer god ne no
creature schal be frend vnto hem. and euerich of^t hem
schul hate oþer wiþ dedly hate [201] ¶ The sones and
the douȝtres schuln rebelln agayns þe fader and þe mooder
and kynrede agayns kynrede and chiden and despisen
euerich of^t hem oþer boþe day and night. as god saith
by þe prophete Michias [202] ¶ And þe louyng^t children
þat^t whilom ¹loueden so fleisschliche euerych oþer^t wolden
euerych of^t hem eten oþer if^t þay miȝten [203] for how
schulden þay louen hem togider in þe peyne of^t helle^t whan
þay hated euerych of^t hem oþer in þe prosperite of^t þis lif^t.
[204] For trustith wel her fleissshly loue was dedly hate
as saiþ þe prophete dauid. who-so þat^t loueth wickid-
nes hateþ his soule. [205] And who-so hatip
his oughne soule. certis he may loue noon oþer wight^t

in no manere [206] ¶ And þerfore in helle is no solace
 ne frendschipe. but euer þe more fleshly kynredes
 þat ben in helle: þe more cursynges þe more chyd-
 ynges and þe more deedly hate þer is among hem
 [207] And forþer ouer þay schul haue defaute of alle
 manere delices ¶ For certis delices ben þe appetites
 of þy fyue wittes as sight hieryng. smellyng. sauor-
 ing and touchyng [208] ¶ But in helle here sight schal be
 ful of derknesse / and of smoke and þerfore ful of
 teeris. and her hieryng ful of waymentynge and of
 gruntyng of teeth as saip ihū crist // [209] ¶ here nose
 þurles schuln ben ful of stynkyng stynk. and as saith
 ysaye þe prophete ¶ here sauoringe schal be ful of bitter
 galle. [210] and touchyng of al here body y-couered
 with fuyr þat neuer schal quenche / and wip wormes
 þat neuer schuln deyen / as god saip by þe mouþ of
 ysaie [211] ¶ And for al so moche as þay schul nouȝt/ wene/
 þat þay may deyen for peyne / and by here deth fle fro
 peyne. þat may þay vnderstonde in þe word of Iob /
 þat saip ¶ Ther as is þe schadow of deth [212] ¶ Certes
 a schadow hap þe liknesse of the þing of which it is
 a schadow. [.
no gap] [213] Right so fareth þe peyne of helle. it is
 lik deþ. for þe horrible anguisshe. And why: for it
 peyneþ hem euer as though men scholden deye anon. But
 certes þay schul not deye. [214] For as saith *Seint*
GreGory ¶ To wrecchid caytifs shal be ȝiue deth wipoute
 deth and ende wipouten ende / and defaute withouten
 faylinge. [215] For here deth schal alway lyuen. and here
 ende schal euermore bygynne. and here defaute schal not
 fayle [216] ¶ And þerfor saip seint Iohan þe
 euangelist ¶ þay schul folwe deþ. and þay schuln
 nouȝt fynde him. and þay schul desire to deyen And deth
 schal flee fro hem. [217] ¶ and eek Iob. saip. þat in helle
 is noon ordre of rule [218] ¶ And al be it þat god hap
 creat al þing in right ordre and no þing wip-

oute ordre. but ¹alle þinges ben ordeyned and noum-
 bred: ȝit napeles þay þat ben dampned been nouȝt
 in ordre ne holden non ordre [219] For þe
 eorþe schal bere hem no fruyt [220] ¶ For as þe prophete
 dauid saiþ. God schal destroye þe fruyt of þe eorþe as
 for hem. ne watir schal ȝiue hem no moysture ne
 þe aier non refreisching. ne fuyr no light. [221] For as
 seiþ seint Basile ¶ The brennyng of þe fuyr of þis
 world schal god ȝiue in helle to hem þat ben dampnyd.
 [222] But þe light and þe clernesse / schal be ȝeue to
 heuene to his children. Right as þe goode man ȝeue
 fleisch to his children and bones to his houndes / [223]
 ¶ And for þay schul haue noon hope to eschape. saiþ seint
 Iob. atte laste þat þer schal horroure and grisly drede
 duelle wiþouten ende [224] ¶ horroure is alway drede
 of harm þat is to come. and þis drede schal euer duelle
 in þe hertes of hem þat ben dampnyd. And þerfore
 han þay lorn al here hope for vij. causes [225] ¶ First /
 for god þat is here Iugge schal be wiþoute mercy to
 hem ne þay may not please him ne noon of his
 halwes Ne þey may ȝiue no þing for here raunsoun /
 [226] ne þay haue no voice to speke to him. ne þay
 may not fle fro peyne. ne þay haue no goodnes in
 hem. þat þay may schewe to deliuere hem fro peyne
 [227] ¶ And þerfore saiþ Salomon / The wikked man
 deyeth. and whan he is deed: he schal haue noon hope to
 eschape fro peyne [228] ¶ who-so wolde þanne wel vn-
 derstonde þese peynes and bythynk him wel þat he
 haþ deserued pilke peynes for his synnes. ¶ Certes he
 schulde haue more talent to sikyn and to wepe þan for
 to synge or pleye [229] ¶ For as þat Salamon saiþ
 ¶ who-so þat þe science to knowe þe peynes þat
 ben establid and ordeynt for synne: he wolde make
 sorwe [230] ¶ Tilke science as saiþ seint austyn
 makeþ a man to wayment in his herte

[231] ¶ The fourþe poynt þat oughte make a man

haue contricioun is þe sorwful remembraunce of þe
good þat he hath left to doon heer in eorþe. and
eek þe good þat he haþ lorn [232] ¶ Soþly þe goode
werkes þat he hath left: eyþer þay been þe goode
werkes þat he wrought er he fel in to deedly synne:
or elles þai ben þe goode werkes þat he [.
. . . [233] *no gap in the MS.*] dede
er he fel into synne ben amortised. and astoneyed
and dullid by ofte synnyng. [234] þat opere
goode werkes that he wrouȝte whil he lay in dedly
synne been outrelly deede ¹as to þe lif perdurable in
heuen. [235] þanne þilke goode werkes þat ben
mortified by ofte synnyng whiche goode werkes he dede
whiles he was in charite ne mowe neuer quyken agayn
withouten verray penitence. [236] And þerof saith god
by þe mouth of Ezechiel ¶ That if þe rightful man re-
tourne agayn fro his rightwisnesse and werke wikked-
nesse. schal he liue: [237] nay. For alle þe goode werkes
þat he haþ wrought ne schuln neuer be in remembrance
for he schal dye in his synne. [238] And vpon þilke
chapitre saith seint Gregory þus. þat we schuln vnder-
stonde þis principally. [239] That whan we doon dedly
synne it is for nouȝt þanne to reherse or to drawe in to
memorie þe goode werkes þat we han wrought biforn.
[240] For certis in þe werkyng of þe dedly synne
þer is no trust to no good werkes that we han don biforne
þis tyme. þat is to say as for to haue þerby þe lif per-
durable in heuen. [241] But napeles þe goode
werkes quiken agayn and comen again and helpen and
auailen to haue þe lif perdurable in heuen whan we
han contricioun [242] ¶ But soþly þe goode werkes þat
men doon whil þat þai ben in deedly synne. for as moche
as þay were doon in dedly synne: þay may neuer quyken
[. . [243]
. *no gap in the MS.*] ¶ And al be it þat þay
auailen not to haue þe lif perdurable: ȝit auaylen

þay to abbrigging^t of^t þe peyne of^t helle or elles to gete temporal riches. [244] Or elles þat^t god wol þe raper enlumyne and lightene þe hert^t of^t þe synful man to haue repentaunce. [245] and eek^t þey auailen for to vsen a man to do goode werkes þat^t þe feend haue þe lasse power of^t his soule. [246] ¶ And þus þe curteys lord ihū crist^t ne wolde nouȝt^t no good werk^t be lost^t. For in som what^t it schal auaille. [247] But^t for als moche as þe goode werkes þat^t men don whil þay ben in good lif^t ben amortised by synne folwyng^t and eek^t sith þat^t alle the goode werkes þat^t men doon whil þay ben in dedly synne been outrelly deede as for to haue þe lif^t perdurable^t [248] wel may þat^t man þat^t no goode werkes werkīþ synge þilke newe freisch song^t. Iay tout^t perdu moun temps et moun labour [249] For certis synne byreueth a man boþe goodnes of^t nature and eek^t þe goodnes of^t grace [250] ¶ For soply þe grace of^t þe holy gost^t fareþ lik fyre þat^t may not ben ydel. For fuyr as it forletīþ his werk- yng^t it faileth anon ¶ And right^t so whan þe grace faileþ^t [251] þan lesith þe synful man þe goodnes of^t glorie þat^t oonly is byhight^t ¹to goode men þat^t labouren and werken [252] ¶ wel may he be sory þanne þat^t oweth al his lif^t to god as longe as he haþ lyued and eek^t as longe as he schal lyue. þat^t no goodnes ne hath to paye wiþ his dette to god to whom he oweth al his lyf^t. [253] For trusteþ wel he schal ȝiue accompt^t as saīþ seint Bernard of^t alle þe goodes þat^t han be ȝeuen him in þis present lif^t. & how he hath hem dispendid. [254] nat^t so moche þat^t þer ne schal not perische an heer of^t his heed ne a moment^t of^t an hour ne schal not^t perische of^t his tyme þat^t he ne schal ȝiue of^t it a rekenyng.

[255] ¶ The .v^{te}. maner of^t contricioun þat^t moeueþ a man þerto is þe remembraunce of^t þe passioun þat^t oure lord ihū crist^t suffred for. vs and for our synnes [256] ¶ For as seiþ seint Bernard whil þat^t I lyue I schal haue remem-

braunce of þe passioun þat oure lord ihū crist suffred for
 vs in preching. [257] his werynesse in trauayling his tempt-
 acioun whan he fastid. his longe wakinges whan he
 prayde his teeres whan he wepte for pite of
 good peple [258] þe wo and þe schame and þe
 filthe þat men saide to him ofte foul spitting^g
 þat men spitten on his face. Of þe buffettis þat men
 3af^t him of þe foule mowes and of þe re-
 proues þat men to him saiden [259] of þe nayles
 with whiche he was nayled to þe cros and of al þe
 remenaunt of his passioun þat he suffred for my synnes
 and no þing^t for his gilt [260] ¶ And 3e schal vnder-
 stonde þat in mannes synne is eury maner ordre
 of ordinaunce turned vpsodoun. [261] ¶ For it is soþ
 þat god & resoun and sensualite and þe body of man
 be so ordeyned that euerich of þese .iiij.
 schulde haue lordschipe ouer [. . . [262]
 *no gap in the MS.*] resoun and resoun ouer
 sensualite. and sensualite ouer þe body of man.
 [263] ¶ But^t soþly whan man synnep al þis ordre or
 ordinaunce is tordⁿ vpsodoun [264] and
 þanne for as moche as þe resoun of a man ne wol not^t be
 subiect ne obeissant to god þat is his lord by right^t per-
 fore lesith it þe lordschipe þat it schulde haue in
 sensualite and eek^t ouer þe body of man. [265] And
 why^t For sensualite rebellith þanne agayns resoun. And
 by þat way lesith resoun þe lordschipe ouer sensualite
 and ouer þe body. [266] For right^t as resoun is rebel to
 god^t Right^t so is boþe sensualite rebel to resoun and
 þe body also [267] And certis þis disordynaunce and
 þis rebelloun oure lord ihū crist bought^t vpon his
 precious body ful deere ¶ And herkeneth in which wise
 [268] ¶ For as moche as resoun is rebel to god^t per-
 fore is man worþy to haue sorwe and to be deed.
 [269] þis suffred oure lord ihū crist for man and after þat
 he was bytraysed of his disciple and destreyned and

bounde so þat þe blood brast out at euery nayl of his
 hondes as saith seint austyn [270] ¶ And forþer ouer
 for as mochil as resoun of man wol nought daunte sensu-
 alite whan it may þefore is man worþy to haue schame
 ¶ And þis suffred oure lord ihū crist for man whan þay
 spitten in his face [271] And forþer ouer þanne for as
 moche as þe caytif body of man is rebelle
 boþe to resoun and to sensualite. þefore it is worþy þe
 deth [272] ¶ And þis suffred oure lord ihū crist for vs
 vpon þe croys wher as þer was no part of his body
 fre wiþoute gret peyne and bitter passioun [273]
 ¶ And al þis suffred ihū crist þat neuer forfeþed.
 [.
no gap in the MS.] So mochil am I streyned for þe
 þinges þat I neuer deseruyd and to moche defouled
 for schendschip þat man is worthy to haue [274] And þer-
 fore may þe synful man wel saye as saith sent Bernard
 ¶ Acursed be þe bitternesse. [.
 *no gap in the MS.*] [275] For certis
 after þe dyuers discordaunces of oure wickednes was
 þe passioun of oure lord ihū crist ordeyned in diuers þinges
 [276] ¶ As þus. Certis synful mannes soule is bytraysid
 of þe deuel by coueitise of temporal prosperite and
 scorned by disceyt whan he cheseþ fleischly delytes and
 ȝit is it tormentid by impacienc of aduersite and byspit
 by seruage and subieccioun of synne. and atte last it is
 slayn finally [277] ¶ For þis discordaunce of synful man
 was Ihū crist first bytraised and after was he bounde
 that com for to vnbynden vs fro synne and of peyne [278]
 ¶ Than was he scorned: þat oonly schulde be
 honoured in alle þing of alle þinges. [279]
 ¶ Than was his visage þat oughte be desired to be say
 of al man-kynde. In which visage aungels desiren to
 loke vileynsly byspit. [280] Thanne was he scorned
 þat no þing had agilt. and fynally þanne was he
 crucified and slayn [281] Thanne was accomplished þe

word of ysaye ¶ He was woundid for
 oure mysdede and defouled by oure felonies [282]
 ¶ Now sith ihū crist tok vpon him þilke
 peyne of alle oure wikkednes: Mochil oughte synful
 men wepe and bywayle þat for his synnes schulde goddes
 sone of heuene al þis endure [283] ¶ The .vj^{te}.
 þing þat ouzte to moeue a man to contricioun is þe hope
 of þre þinges. þat is to sayn. forþeuenes of synne
 and þe gifte of grace wel ¹for to do. and þe glorie of
 heuen wiþ which god schal guerdoun man for his
 goode deedis [284] ¶ And for als moche as ihū crist
 ȝeueþ vs þese gifies of his largesse and of his souerayn
 bounte: þefore is he cleped. Ihc nazarenus rex
Iudeorum [285] ¶ Ihū is for to say saueour or sa-
 uacioun of whom me schal hope to haue forþeuenes of
 synnes which þat is proprely sauacioun of synnes
 [286] ¶ And þefore seyde þe aungel to Ioseph ¶ Thow
 clepe his name Ihc þat schal saue his poeple of here
 synnes [287] ¶ And her of saith Seint petir ¶ Ther is
 noon oþer name vnder heuen þat is ȝeue to any man
 by which a man may be sauýd. but oonly Ihc [288]
nazarenus is as moche to say as florischinge in
 which a man schal hope þat he þat ȝeueþ him remissioun
 of synnes schal ȝiue him grace wel wel to doo ¶ For
 in þe flour is hope of fruyt / in tyme comynge. And in
 forȝiuenes hope of grace wel to do [289] ¶ I
 was at þe dore of þin herte saip Ihc and cleped for to
 entre. he þat openith to me. schal haue forþeuenes of
 synne. [290] I wol entre into him by my grace and
 soupe with him by þe goode workes þat he schal doon
 whiche werkes ben þe foode of god ¶ And he schal soupe
 wiþ me by þe grete ioye þat I schal ȝiue him [291]
 ¶ Thus schal man hope þat for his werkis of penaunce
 god schal ȝiue him his regne as he bihetith him in þe
 gospel

[292] Now schal man vnderstonde in what

maner schal be his contricioun ¶ I say it schal
 be vniuersal and total ¶ þis is to say. a man schal be
 verrey repentaunt for alle his synnes þat he haþ doon in
 delyt of his þoughþ for delit is ful perilous [293] ¶ For þer
 ben tuo maners of consentynge [.
 *no gap*] of affeccioun whan a man is moeued
 to synne & delitith him longe for to þinke on
 þat synne. [294] and his resoun aparceyueth wel þat
 it is synne agayns þe lawe of god. & 3it his resoun
 refreyneþ not his foule delit or talent þough he seth wel
 apertly þat it is aȝenst/ þe reuerence of god al þough
 his resoun consente not to do þe synne in dede:
 [295] 3it sayn some doctours delyt þat
 duellith longe it is ful perilous al be it neuer so lite
 [296] ¶ And also a man schulde sorwe namely for al
 þat he haþ desired agayn þe lawe of god wiþ
 parfyt consentynge of his hert and of his resoun ¶ For þerof
 is no doute þat it is dedly synne [297] [.
 *no gap*] þat it nas first in mannes
 þoughþ. & after þat in his delit/ and so forþ in to
 consentynge and in to dede [298] ¶ wherfore say I þat
 many men repente hem neuer ¹of suche þoughþes and
 delitis. ne neuer schriue hem of hit. but oonly of þe
 dede of grete synnes outward [299] ¶ wherfore I say
 þat suche wickid delitis and wickid þouȝtes ben
 subtile bigilours of hem þat schuln be dampned [300]
 ¶ More ouer man oughþe to sorwe for his wicked
 wordes as wel as his wikked dedes. For certis
 þe repentaunce of a singuler synne & nouȝt repente of alle
 his oþer synnes [.
 *no gap*] may nouȝt
 auaille [301] ¶ For certis god almighty is al good and
 þerfore he forȝeueþ al or elles right nouȝt [302]
 ¶ And here-of seiþ seint augustin ¶ I wot certeynly þat
 god is enemy to euery synnere [303] ¶ And how þanne he
 þat obseruith oon synne schal he haue remissioun of þe

remenant^t of^t his oþer synnes^t Nay. [304] And forþer
 ouer contricioun schulde be woundes sorwful and an-
 guisschous and þerfore ȝiueþ him god plainly his
 mercy ¶ And þerfore whan my soule was anguisshous
 wipinne me^t I hadde remembraunce of^t god þat^t
 my prayer mighte come to him [305] ¶ And forþer ouer.
 contricioun moste be continuely and þat^t a man haue stede-
 fast^t purpos to schryue him and for to amende him of^t
 his lyf^t [306] ¶ For sople whil contricioun lastith man
 may euer hope of^t forȝeuenes and of^t þis comeþ
 hate of^t synne þat destroyeth synne boþe in himself^t
 and eek^t in oþer folk^t at^t his power [307] ¶ And þerfore
 saith dauid. ȝe þat^t louen god^t hatith wikkidnesse. For
 trustiþ wel for to loue god. is for to loue þat^t he loueþ.
 and hate þat he hatip

[308] ¶ The laste þing^t þat^t a man schuld vnderstonde in
 contricioun is þis. wher of^t auailith contricioun ¶ I say
 þat^t som tyme contricioun deliuereþ man fro synne
 [309] of^t which þat dauid saith ¶ I say quod dauid.
 þat^t is to say. I purposid fermely to schryue me and
 þou lord relesedist^t my synne [310] ¶ And right^t so
 as contricioun auailith nat^t wipoute sad purpos of^t
 schrift^t if^t man haue oportunitē^t Right^t so. litil worth is
 shrifte or satisfaccioun wipoute contricioun [311] ¶ And
 more ouer contricioun destruyeþ þe prisoun of^t helle
 and makip wayk^t and feble þe strengthes of^t þe
 deueles and restorith þe ȝift^t of^t þe holy gost/ and
 of^t alle vertues [312] and it clensith þe soule of^t
 synnes and deliuereþ þe soule fro þe peynes of^t helle
 and fro þe companye of^t þe deuyl and fro þe seruage
 of^t synne and restorith to alle goode espiritueles in
 to þe companye & communioun of^t holy chirche [313]
 ¶ And forþer ouer it makith him þat^t som tyme was
 sone of^t Ire^t ¹sone of^t grace ¶ And alle þese þinges
 he prouith by holy writte. [314] And þerfore he þat
 wil sette his herte to þese þinges^t he were ful

wys ¶ For soþe he scholde not þanne in al his lyf
 haue corrage to synne. but ȝiuen his body and al his herte
 to þe seruice of Ihū crist and þerof do him
 homage [315] ¶ For certis oure swete lord ihū crist
 haþ sparid vs so debonerly in oure folyes. þat if he ne
 hadde pite of mannes soule! sory songe mighte we alle
 synge. ¶ **Explicit prima pars Incipit secunda pars**
eiusdem

[No break in the MS.]

[316]

THe secounde partye of penitence is confessioun.
 þat is signe of contricioun [317] ¶ Now schul ȝe
 vnderstonde what is confessioun and wheþir
 it oughte needes be doon or noon. A whiche
 ben conuenable to verray confessioun

[318] ¶ First schalt þou vnderstonde þat confessioun is
 verrey schewyng of synnes to þe prest [319] þis is to
 sayn verray. For he moot schewe him of alle þe
 condiciouns þat ben longynge to his synne as ferforth as he
 can [320] al mot be sayd and nouȝt excused ne
 hyd ne forwrappid and nouȝt anaunte him of his goode
 werkis [321] ¶ And forþermore it is necessary to vnder-
 stonde whens þat synnes springe and how þay
 exersen. and whiche þer ben

[322] of þe springing of synnes as seint poul saiþ
 in þis wise ¶ That right as by a man synne entred first
 in to þis world. and þorugh þat synne deth! Right so
 pilke deth entred in to alle men þat synneden. [323]
 and þis man was adam by whom þat synne entred in to
 þis world whan he brak þe comaundement of god.
 [324] And þerfore he þat first was so mighty þat he
 schulde not haue deyed bicam sibbe on þat he moste
 needis deye wheþir he wolde or noon and al his progenie
 þat is in þis world þat in pilke manner synneden [325] ¶ loke
 þat in þe / .testate of Innocence whan adam and Eue

[¹ leaf 260]

wraþþe and of dampnacioun *perdurable* if it nere baptisme þat we resceyuen which bynymeþ vs þe culpe ¶ But forsoþe þe peyne duelliþ wiþ vs as to temptacioun which peyne highte concupiscence [336] ¶ And þis concupiscence whan it is wrongfully disposed or ordeyned in man: hit makith him to coueyte couetise of fleisschly synne by sight of his eyzen as to erþely þinges. and eek coueitise of heighnesse as by pride of herte

[337] Now as to speke of þe firste coueitise þat is concupiscence after þe lawe of oure membris þat is [.
. [338] *no gap*] nouȝt obeissant to god þat is lord þerfore is fleissch to him disobeissant þurgh concupiscence which þat ȝit is clepid norisshing of synne [. *no gap*] [339] ¶ Therefore al þe while þat a man hap in him þe peyne of concupiscence it is impossible but he be tempted som tyme and moeued in his fleisch to synne /. [340] ¶ And þis may not faile as longe as he lyueþ ¶ hit may wel wexe feble and faille by vertu of baptisme and by þe grace of god þorough penitence. [341] but fully schal it neuer ¹quenche þat he schal som tyme be moeued in himself but if he were al refreydit by siknes or by malice of sorserye or colde drinkes [342] ¶ For what saiþ seint poul ¶ The fleissch coueitith agayn þe spirit. and þe spirit agayn þe fleisch þay ben so contrarie and so stryuen þat a man may nouȝt alwey do as he wolde [343] ¶ The same seint poul after his penaunce in watir and in lond. in watir by night and by day in gret peril and in gret peyne in lond and in famyne. and in þurst and colde. and cloþles oones almost stoned al to þe deth [344] ¶ ȝit saide he allas I caytif man. who schal delyuere me fro þe prisoun of my caytif body [345] And seint Ierom. whan he long tyme had woned in desert here wher as he hadde no compaignye but of wilde bestes wher as he hadde

no mete but herbes & water to his drink. ne non bed but þe nakid erþe. For which his fleisch was as blak^t as an Ethiopen for hete and neigh destroyed for cold [346] ¶ 3it^t sayde he þat^t þe brennyng^t of leccchery boylid in al his body [347] ¶ wherfore I wot^t wel sicurly þat^t þay be desceyued þat^t say þay ben not^t temptid in here body. [348] ¶ witnesse on seint^t Iame thapostil þat^t saith. þat^t euery wight^t is tempted in his oughne concupiscence þat^t is to sayn þat^t euerych of^t vs hath matere and occasioun to be tempted of þe norischyng^t of synne þat^t is in his body [349] ¶ And þerfore seint Iohan þe Euaungelist^t saith ¶ If^t þat^t we sayn we be wiþoute synne^t we deceyue oure silf^t and troupe is nough^t in vs

[350] ¶ Now schal 3e vnderstonde in what maner þat^t synne waxiþ and encreseceth in a man ¶ The firste þing^t is þilke norischyng^t of synne of^t which I spak^t byforn þilke concupiscence. [351] And after þat^t cometh þe Subieccioun of^t þe deuel. þis is to sayn þe deueles bely with which he bloweþ in man þe fuyr of fleisschly concupiscence [352] And after þat^t a man by-think^t him whepir he wol don it/ or non. þilke þing^t to which he is tempted. [353] ¶ and þanne if^t þat^t a man wiþstonde and wayue þe firste entisynges of^t his fleisshe and of^t þe feend it is no synne. and if so be he do not^t so^t þanne fleeth he anoon a flame of delit/ [354] and þanne it is good to be war and kepe him wel or ellis he wil falle anoon in to consentyng^t of synne / and þanne wol he do it^t if^t he may haue tyme and space and place [355] ¶ And of^t þis matere saith Moyses by þe deuel in þis manere ¶ þe feend¹ saith. // I wol chace and pursewe þe man by wickid suggestiouns and I wil hent^t him by moeuyng^t or steryng of synne and I wil parte my prise or my pray by deliberacioun and my lust^t schal be accomplit in delit. I wil drawe my sword in consentynge [356] ¶ For certes right^t as a swerd departiþ a þing^t in tuo parties right^t

so consentynge departeþ god fro man and þanne wol I sle him with my hond in dede of synne. þus saith þe feend. [357] For certis þanne is a man al deed in soule and þus is synne accomsid by temptacioun by delit and by consentyng and þanne is þe synne cleped actual

[358] ¶ For soþe synne is in two maneres. ouþer it is venial or dedly synne. Sothly whan man louith any creature more þan ihū crist/ oure creatour! þanne it is dedly synne. And venial synne is. if a man loue ihū crist lasse þan him oughite [359] ¶ For soþe þe dede of þis venial synne is ful perilous. For it amenisith þe loue þat men schulde haue to god more and more [360] ¶ And þerfore if a man charge more himself with many suche venial synnes. Certes but if so be þat he som tyme discharge him of hem by schrifte! þay may ful lightly amenise in him al þe loue þat he hath to ihū crist [361] and in þis wise skippith venial in to dedly synne. ¶ For certes þe more þat a man chargith his soule wiþ venial synnes! þe more is he enclyned to falle in deedly synne [362] ¶ And þerfore let vs nouȝt be negligent to descharge vs of venial synnes ¶ For the prouerbe saith. þat many smale makith a gret [363] ¶ And herken þis ensample ¶ A greet wawe of þe see comeþ som tyme wiþ so gret a violence þat it drenchith þe schip. and þe same harm doon som tyme smale droppis of water þat entriþ þurgh a litil creues in to þe thurrok and in to þe bothum of a schip if men be so negglient þat þay descharge it noughit by tyme [364] ¶ And þerfore al pough þer be difference bitween þese tuo causes of drenching. algates the schip is dreynt [365] ¶ Right so farith it som tyme of deedly synne and of anoyous venial synnes whan þay multiplien in a man so gretly þat þilke worldly þynges þat he loueth þurgh which he sinneth venially is as gret in his herte as þe loue of god or more [366]

¶ And þerfore þe loue of euery þing þere is not byset in god ne doon principally for goddes sake / al þough a man loue it lasse þan god. 3it is it venial synne [367] ¹And deedly synne whan þe loue of eny þing weyeth in þe hert of a man as moche as þe loue of god or more [368] ¶ Dedly synne is as saith seint austyn. whan man torneth his hert from god which þat is verray souerayn bounte þat may not chaunge and flitte. and 3iue his herte to a þing þat may chaunge and flitte. [369] and certes þat is euery þing saue god of heuen ¶ For soþe if þat a man 3iue his loue þe which that he owip to god wip al his herte vnto a creature. certes as moche of loue as he 3iueþ to pilke creature so moche he reueth fro god. [370] and þerfore doth he synne. ¶ For he þat is dettour to god and 3eldeth not his dette þat is to sayn al þe loue of his hert

[371] ¶ Now sippe man vnderstondith generally which is venial synne: þanne is it couenable to telle specially of synnes whiche þat many man perauenture ne demith hem no synnes and schryueth him not of þe same þinges and 3it napeles þay ben synnes [372] ¶ And soply as clerkes writen þis is to say. at euery tyme þat man etith or drinkith more þan suffiseþ to þe sustienauunce of his body in certeyn he doþ synne: [373] and eek whan he spekith more þan it needith he doþ synne. and eek whan he herkeneth nouȝt benignely þe pleynt of þe pore [374] eek whan he is in hele of body and wil not faste whan oper folk fasten wipouten cause resonable. / eek whan he slepith more þan needith or whan he comeþ by pilk enchesoun to late to holy chirche or to oper werkes of charite [375] Eke whan he vseþ his wyf wipoute souerayn desir of engendrure to thonour of god and for þentent to 3elde to his wyf þe dette of his body. [376] eek whan he wil not visite þe sike and þe prisoner if he may

¶ eek^t if^t he loue wyf^t or child or oþer worldly þing^t more þan resoun requireth. eek^t if^t he flatere or blaundisshe more þan him oughte for eny necessite [377] ek^t if^t a man menuse or wiþdrawe þe almesse of þe pouere eek^t if^t he apparaylith his body more deliciously þan it nedith or ete it^t to hastily by licouresnes. [378] eek^t if^t he talke of vanitees at^t chirche or at^t goddis seruice. or þat^t he be a talkere of ydil wordes of vanite or of vilonye / for he schal ȝelde of hem account at^t þe day of doome. [379] eek^t whan he heetith or assureth to do þinges þat^t he may nouȝt performe. eek^t whan þat^t by lightnes or folý he myssaith or scorneþ his ¹neighebor. [380] eek^t whan he haþ any wicked suspeccioun of þing^t þat^t he wot^t of it^t no sothfastnesse. [381] þese þinges and mo wiþoute nombre ben synnes as saith seint^t austyn

[382] ¶ Now schal men vnderstonde þat^t al be it^t so þat^t noon erþely man may eschiewe alle venial synnes: ȝit^t may he refreyne hem by þe brennyng^t loue þat^t he haþ to oure lord ihū crist and by prayeres and by confessioun and oþer goode werkes. so þat it^t schal but^t litil greue [383] ¶ For as saith seint^t austyn ¶ ȝif^t a man loue god in such a maner þat^t al þat^t euer he doth is in þe loue of god or for þe loue of god verrailly for he brenneþ in þe loue of god [384] ¶ loke how moche þat^t a drope of watir þat^t fallith in a furneys ful of fuyr annoyeth of greueth: So moche annoyeth a venial synne vnto a man þat is perfytt in þe loue of ihū crist [385] ¶ Men may also refreyne venial synne vnto a man by resceyuyng^t of þe precious body of ihū crist / [386] by receyuyng^t eek^t of holy water. by almes dede. by general confessioun of Confiteor at^t masse and at^t complyn and blessing^t of bisschops and of prestes and by other goode werkis

[No break in the MS.]

[387] ¶ Now it is bihouely ping^t to telle whiche ben dedly synnes þat^t is to sayn chiueteyns of synnes. alle þay renne in oon loos. but^t in diuers maners now ben þay cleped chiueteyns. For als moche as þay ben chief^t and springers of alle opere synnes [388] ¶ Of þe roote of þese seuen synnes; þanne is pride þe general synne and roote of alle harmes ¶ For of þis roote springen general braunches. As Ire. Enuye. accidie or sleuthe. auarice or coueitise. to commune vnderstondynge. glotonye and lecherie [389] ¶ And euerich of þese synnes hath his braunches and his twigges as schal be declarid in here chapitres folwinge.

[*No break in the MS.*]

[390] and þough so be þat^t no man can telle vtterly þe nombre of þe twigges and of þe harm þat^t comeþ of pride; ȝit^t wol I schewe a party of hem as ȝe schul vnderstonde [391] ¶ Ther is Inobedience. auauntyng^t. ypocrisie. despit^t. arragaunce. Imprudence. Swellyng^t of hert^t. Insolence. Elacioun. [.
. . . *no gap in the MS.*] pertinacie. veinglorie. and many anoþer twigge þat^t I can not^t telle ne declare [392] Inobedient^t is he þat^t disobeieth for despyt^t to þe comaundement^z of god and to his souereigns. and to his gostly fader. [393] Auauntour is he þat^t bosteth of þe harm or of þe bounte þat^t he haþ don [394] ¶ ypocrisy is þat^t ¹hydeth to schewe him such as he is and scheweþ him such as he not^t is [395] ¶ Despitous is he þat^t haþ desdayn of his neighebour þat^t is to say of his euen cristen or haþ despit^t to doon þat^t him ought^t to doon [396] ¶ Arragaunt^t is he þat^t pinkeþ þat^t he hath þilke bountees in him þat^t he haþ not^t or

weneth þat he schulde haue hem by desert/. or
 elles he demeth þat he is þat he is not. [397] ¶ Im-
 pudent is he þat for his pride hath no schame of his
 synne. [398] ¶ Swellyng of hert is whan a man
 reioysith him of harm þat he haþ don [399] ¶ Inso-
 lent is he þat dispisith in his iuggement alle oþer
 folk as to regard of his valieu and of his connyng & of
 his spekyng and of his beryng [400] ¶ Elacioun is whan
 he may neuer suffre to haue maister ne felawe [401]
 ¶ Impacient is he: þat wil not ben I-taught ne vnder-
 nome of his vices and by stryf werreþ troupe witynge
 and defendeþ his folie [402] ¶ Contimax is he þat
 þorugh his indignacioun and agains euerych auctorite or
 power of hem þat been his souerayns [403] ¶ Pre-
 sumpcioun is whan a man vndertakith and emprisith þat
 him oughte not to do. or elles þat he may not doo. and þat
 is cleped surquidrye ¶ Irreuerence is. whan men doon not
 honour þer as hem ought to doon. and wayteth to be
 reuerenced [404] ¶ Pertinacie is. whan man defendith
 his folye and trusteþ to moche to his owne witte [405]
 ¶ Vayn glorie is. for to haue pomp and delit in
 temporal heighnes and glorifie him in worldly
 estaat [406] ¶ Iangelyng is whan a man spekiþ to
 moche biforn folk & clappith as a mille and takeþ no
 keep what he saiþ

[407] and 3it is þer a priue spice of pride þat
 wayteth first/ to be saluet er he saliewe al be he
 lasse worth þan þat oþer is *par* aduenture. and eek
 wayteþ or desireþ to sitte aboue him or to go aboue him in
 þe way. or kisse pax. or ben encensed or gon to
 þe offringe biforn his neighebores [408] and haþ such [. . .

.
 *no gap in the MS.*] a proud desir to be
 magnified and honoured toforn þe poeple

[409] ¶ now ben tuo maners of pride. þat
 oon is heighnes wipinne þe hert/ of a man and þat

oper is wipoute. [410] of which soply þese for-
sayde þinges and mo þan I haue said aperteynen to
pride þat^t is in þe hert^t of a man. and þat^t oper spices
of pride ben wipoute [411] ¶ But^t natheles þat^t oon
of þise spices of pride is signe of þat^t oper. Right^t
as gay leuesselle at^t þe tauerne is signe of wyn
þat^t is in þe celer. [412] and þis is in many þinges
as in speche and countenaunce and in outrageous array of
cloþing^t [413] ¶ For certis if^t þer hadde be no synne
in cloþing^t crist^t wolde not^t so soone haue notid and spoke of
þe cloþing^t of þilke riche man in þe gospel. [414] And
saith seint Gregorie þat^t precious cloþing^t is cou-
pable for derthe of it and for his schortnes. and
for his straungenes and disgisines. and for þe super-
fluite. or for þe inordinat skantnes of it/ [415]
Allas many man may sen as in oure dayes þe synful
costlewe array of cloþing^t [.]

[416]
. . . *no gap*] which þat^t makid is so dere to harm of þe
poeple. [417] not^t oonly þe cost^t of embrowdyng^t
þe guyse endentyng^t of barryng^t. / Swandyng^t. palyng^t.
or bendyng^t. and semblable wast^t of cloþ
in vanite [418] ¶ But^t þer is also costlewe furring^t in
here gownes so mochil pounsyng^t of chiseles to make
holes so moche daggyng^t of scheris. [419] for with
þe superfluite in lengþe of the forsaide gownes trayl-
inge in þe donge and in þe myre on hors and eek^t on
foote as wel of man as of womman þat^t al þilke
traylyng^t is verray as in effect/ wasted consumed þred-
bare and rotyn with donge raþer þan it is zeuen to
þe pore to gret^t damage of þe forsaide pore folk^t.
[420] and þat^t in sondry wise. þis is to sain þat^t þe
more þat^t cloþ is wastid þe more most^t it/ coste to
þe poeple for þe scarsenes [421] and forþermore
if^t it so be þat^t þay wolde ȝiue suche pounsed and

daggid cloping^t to þe pore folk^t. it^t is not^t conuenient to were to the pore folk^t ne suffisaunt^t to beete here necessite to kepe hem fro þe desperance of^t þe firmament^t [422] ¶ vpon þat^t oþer syde to speke of^t þe horrible disordinat scantnes of^t cloping^t. as ben þese cuttid sloppis or Anslets þat^t þurgh her schortnes ne couereth not^t þe schamful membre of^t man to wickid entent [423] Alas som men of^t hem schewen þe schap and þe boce of^t the horrible swollen membres þat^t semeth like to þe maledies of^t hirnia in þe wrapping^t of^t here hose / [424] and eek^t þe buttokes of^t hem þat^t faren as it were þe hinder part of^t a sche ape in þe fulle of^t þe moone [425] ¶ And more ouer þe wrecchid swollen membres þat^t þay schewe þurgh desgysng^t in departyng^t of^t here hoses in whyt^t and reed seemith þat half^t þe schameful priue membres were flayn. [426] And if^t it so be þat^t þay departe here hosen in oþer colours. as it whit and blew. or whit and blak^t and reed and so forth^t [427] þanne semith it ¹as by variaunce of^t colour þat^t half^t þe party of^t his priuy membris ben corrupt^t by þe fuyr of^t seint^t antony or by cancre or by other such meschaunce [428] ¶ And ȝit of^t þe hynder partye of^t here buttokes it^t is ful horrible for to see. For certis in þat partie of^t here body þer as þay purgen her stynkyng^t ordure [429] þat^t foule party schewe þay to þe poeple proudly in despyt^t of^t honeste which honeste þat^t ihū crist^t and his frendes obserueden to schewen in his lif [430] ¶ Now as of^t þe outrageous array of^t wommen. God wot^t. þat^t þough þe visage of^t some of^t hem seme ful chaste and debonaire^t ȝit^t notifie þay in here array of^t attyre licorousnesse and pride [431] I say not^t þat^t honeste in cloping^t of^t man or womman is vncouenable ¶ But certis þe superfluite or disordinat skantnes of^t cloping^t is repreuable [432] ¶ Also þe synne of^t here ornament^t or of^t apparaile as in þinges þat^t aperteynen to rydyng^t as in to many delicat^t horses þat^t ben hold-

en for delyt^t þat^t þay ben so faire fat^t and costlewe [433]
 and also many a vicious knaue mayntened by
 cause of^t hem and in to curious harnoys as in sadelis and
 bridlis cropours and peytrelle couered with precious
 cloping^t and riche barres and plates of gold and of
 siluer [434] For whiche god saithe by zacharie þe
 prophete ¶ I wol confounde þe ryders of such horsis
 [435] ¶ These folk^t take litil reward of^t þe ryding^t of
 goddes sone of^t heuen and of^t his harneys whan he rode
 vpon an asse. and hadde noon oþer harneys but^t
 þe cloping^t of his disciples newe. ¶ Ne rede I not^t
 þat^t euer he rode on oþer beest^t [436] ¶ I speke þis
 for þe synne of^t superfluite and nouȝt for resonable
 honeste whan resoun it requirith [437] ¶ And forþer ouer
 certes pride is gretly notified in holdyng^t of gret meyne
 whan þay ben of^t litil profyt^t or of^t right^t no profyt^t.
 [438] and namely whan þat^t meyne is felenous and daun-
 gerous to þe poeple by hardynesse of^t lordschipe or by
 way of^t offices [439] Fo[r] certes suche lordes selle
 þanne here lordschipe to þe deuel of^t helle whan þay
 susteyne þe wickidnes of^t here meyne [440] or elles
 whan þese folk^t of^t lowe degre as is pilke þat^t holden
 hostilries and susteyne þe þeste of^t here hostilers
 and þat is in many maneres of^t disceytes.
 [441] pilke maner of^t folk^t ben þe flyes þat^t folwen
 þe hony or elles þe houndes ¹þat^t folwen þe carayn.
 suche forsayde folk / strangelen spirituelly here lordschipes
 [442] for whiche þus saith dauid þe prophete ¶ wikked
 deth moot^t come vpon such lordschipes. & god ȝeue þat^t
 þay moot^t descende in to helle a doun. For in
 here houses ben iniquites and schrewednesses and not^t god
 of^t heuen. [443] and certes but^t þay do amende-
 ment^t. right^t so as god ȝaf^t his benisoun to pharao by þe
 seruice of^t Iacob and to balan þe seruice of^t Ioseph.
 Right^t so god wil ȝeue his malisoun to such lordschipes
 as susteynen þe wikkednes of^t her seruauntes but^t þay

come to amendement [444] ¶ Pride of þe table apperith
ful ofte. for certes riche men ben cleped to feste
and pore folk ben put away and rebuked [445] ¶ Also
in excesse of diuers metis and drinkis and namely
of suche maner of bake metis brennyng of
wilde fuyr and peynted and castelid wiþ papire and
semblable wast. / so þat it is abusoun for to pinke [446]
and eek in greet preciousnes of vessel & in curiousnesse
of vessel and of mynstraleye by þe whiche a man is stired þe
more to delitis of luxurie [447] if so be that þay sette her
herte þe lasse vpon oure lord ihū crist ¶ Certeyn it is a
synne. and certainly þe delites mighte be so grete
in þe caas þat men mighte lightly falle by hem in to
dedly synne [448] ¶ þe espices þat sourdren of pride
sopely whan þay sourdren of malice ymagined and auised.
aforncast or elles of vsage ben dedly synnes it is
no doute. [449] and whan þay sourden by frelte vn-
auysed sodeinly and sodeinly wiþdrawe agayn al be
þay greuous synnes I gesse þay ben not
dedly [450] Now mighte men axe wher-of pride
sourdeth and springeth ¶ I say som tyme it
springith of þe goodes of nature / and som tyme of
þe goodes of [. *no gap*]
grace. [451] certes goodes of nature stonden
ouper in goodes of body or goodes of soule [452]
¶ Certis þe goodes of body ben hele of body.
strengþe. deliuerance. beaute. gentrie. fraunchises.
[453] ¶ Goodes of nature of þe soule. ben goodes with
scharp vnderstondyng subtil engyn vertu naturel. good
memorie [454] ¶ Goodes of fortune been riches. highe
degrees of lordschipes preisyng of þe poeple [455]
¶ Goodes of grace been science. power to suffre
spirituel trauaile. benignite. vertuous contemplacioun.
wiþstondyng of temptacioun and semblable þinges.
[456] of whiche forsayde goodes certe it is a ful gret
¹foly a man to pryden him in any of hem alle [457]

¶ Now as for to speke of goodes of nature: god wot þat som tyme we haue hem in nature as moche as to oure damage as to oure profit [458] ¶ As for to speke of hele of body. certes it passith ful lightly. and eek it is ful ofte enchesoun of þe siknesse of þe soule [. *no gap in the MS.*]

¶ And þerfore þe more þat oure body is hool þe more be we in peril to falle [459] ¶ Eke for to pride him in his strengþe of body it is a foly. for certes þe fleisch coueytith again þe spirit. and ay þe more strong þat þe fleisch is þe sorier may þe soule be / [460] and ouer al þis strengþe of body and worldly hardynes causeþ ful ofte many man to peril and meschaunce [461] Eek for to pride him of his gentrie is ful gret folye: For often tyme þe gentrie of þe body bynymeth þe gentry of þe soule ¶ And we ben alle of oon fader and of oon moder & alle we ben of oon nature roten and corrupt riche and pore [462] ¶ For soþe oon maner gentry is for to prayse þat appaileþ mannes corrage with vertues and moralitees and makith him cristes child [463] ¶ For trustiþ wel ouer what man þat synne haþ maistry: he is verray cherl to synne

[464] ¶ Now ben þer general synnes of gentilesce as schewyng of vice & rybaudrie and seruage of synne. in word in werk and contenaunce [465] ¶ And vsinge vertu curtesie and clenness / and to be liberal þat is to sayn large by mesure. for þilke þat passith mesure is foly and synne [466] ¶ And anoþer is to remembre him of bounte þat he of oþer folk haþ resceyued [467] ¶ Another is to be benigne to his goode subiectis ¶ wherfore as saiþ senek. ¶ Ther is no þing more couenable to a man of heigh estate þan debonairte and pite [468] ¶ And þerfore þise flies þat men clepen bees whan þay make here king: þay chesen oon þat haþ no pricke wher wip he may styng [469]

¶ Anoper is. a man to haue a noble herte & a diligent to atteigne to hihe vertuous þinges [470] ¶ Certis also who þat prideth him in þe deedes of grace: is eek an outrageous fool ¶ For þilke ȝiftes of grace þat schulde haue I-torned him to goodnes and medicyne: torneth him to venym and to confusioun as saip seint gregory [471] ¶ Certis also. who-so pridith him in þe goodes of fortune. he is a ful gret fool ¶ For som tyme is a man a gret lord by þe morwe þat is a caytif and a wrecche er it be night. / [472] ¶ And som tyme þe riches of a man is cause of his deth. / ¹¶ Som tyme þe delice is cause of his greuous maledye þurgh which he deieth [473] ¶ Certis þe commendacioun of þe poeple is somtyme ful fals and ful brutil for to truste. þis day þay prayse: to morwe þay blame [474] ¶ God woot desir to haue commendacioun of þe poeple hap causid deth of many a busy man [475] ¶ Now sith so is. þat ȝe han herd and vnderstonde what is pride. And whiche ben þe spices of it / and whens pride sourdeth and springeþ :

[*No gap in the MS.*]

[476] Now schul ȝe vnderstonde. which is þe remedy agayns pride ¶ And þat is humilite or meekenes [477] þat is a vertue þurgh which a man hap verray knowleche of himself and holdith of himself no pride ne pris ne deynte as in regard of his desertes considering euermore his frelte. [478] ¶ Now ben þer þre maners of humilite. As humilite in hert/ anoper is humilite in his mouth. þe þridde in his workes // [479] ¶ þe humilite in his herte. is in foure maners: þat oon is whan a man holdith him self not worth biforn god of heuen. anoper is whan he despiseþ

no man [480] ¶ The þrid is. whan he ne rekkip nough^t þough a man holde him nouȝt^t worth ¶ The ferþe is whan he holdeþ him nough^t sory of^t his humiliacioun [481] ¶ Also þe humilite of^t mouth is in foure þinges. In attempre speche. and in humbles of^t speche. and he byknowith wiþ his owne mouth þat^t he is such as him þenkith þat^t he is in herte. Anoper is whan he praisith þe bounte of^t anoper man and no þing^t þerof^t amenusith [482] ¶ Humilite eek^t in werk^t is in foure maneres ¶ The first^t is whan he puttith oper men toforn him ¶ þe secounde is to chese þe lewedest^t place ouer al ¶ þe þrid is gladly to assente to good counseil [483] ¶ þe ferþe is gladly to stonde to thaward of^t his souereyns or of^t him þat^t is in heigher degre. certeyn þis is a gret^t werk^t of^t humilite

[*No break in the MS.*]

[484] ¶ **De Inuidia.** [*in margin*]

After pride now wol I speke of^t þe foule synne of^t Envye which þat^t is as by þe word of^t þe philosophe. sorwe of^t other mennes prosperite ¶ And after þe word of^t seint^t austyn. is it sorwe of^t oper mennes wele & ioie of^t oper mennes harm [485] ¶ This foule synne is platly agayns þe holy gost^t. al be it so þat^t euery synne is agayn the holy gost^t! ȝit^t natheles for as moche as bounte aperteyneth proprely to þe holy gost^t. and enuye proprely is malice! þerfore is it^t proprely agayns þe bounte of^t þe holy gost [486] ¶ Now haþ malice ¹two spices. þat^t is to sayn hardnes of^t hert^t in wickednes or ellis þe fleisch of^t man is blynd þat^t he considereth not^t þat^t he is in synne [. *no gap*] which is þe hardnes of^t the deuyll [487] ¶ That^t oper spice of^t enuye is. whan a man warieth troupe and wot^t þat^t it is troupe. and eek^t whan he warieth þe grace þat^t god haþ ȝeue to his

neighebor and al þis is by enuye [488] ¶ Certes
 þan is enuye þe worste synne þat' is ¶ For sothely
 alle oþer synnes ben somtyme oonly agains oon special
 vertu [489] ¶ But' certes enuye is agayns alle vertues
 and agayns al goodnes. for it is sory of' alle þe
 bountees of' his neighebor ¶ And in þis maner it is
 diuers from alle þe synnes. [490] ¶ For wel vnneþe
 is þer any synne þat' he ne hath som delit in himself'
 sauf' oonly enuye þat' euer hath in it self' anguiscþ and
 sorwe [491] ¶ The spices of' enuye ben þese ¶ Ther is
 first' sorwe of' oþer mennes goodnes and of' her prosperite.
 and prosperite is kyndely matier of' ioye. þanne is enuye a
 synne agayns kynde [492] ¶ The secounde spice of' enuye.
 is ioye of' oþer mennes harm. and þat' is proprely lik'
 to the deuyl þat' euer reioyeth him of' mennes harm [493]
 ¶ Of' þese tuo spices cometh bacbytyng'. and þis synne of'
 bakbytyng' or detraccioun hath certein spices as þus ¶ Som
 man praiseth his neighebor by a wickid entent'. [494]
 For he makith alway a wickid knotte atte last' ende.
 alway he makith a but'. at' þe last' ende þat' is þing' of'
 more blame þan worth is al þe praysing' [495] ¶ The
 secounde spice is þat' if a man be good and doth or saith a
 þing' to good entent': þe bakbiter wol torne al pilke
 goodnes vps-down to his schrewed entent'. [496]
 þe þridde is to amenuse þe bounte of' his neighebor.
 [497] þe ferþe spiece of' bakbytyng' is þis. þat' if men
 speke goodnes of' a man: þan wil þe bakbiter seyn.
 par fay 3it' such a man is bet' þan he in dispraysynge
 of' him þat' men praise. [498] þe fifte spice is þis
 for to consente gladly and herken gladly to þe harm
 þat' men speke of' oþer folk'. þis synne is ful gret'
 and ay encresith after thentent' of' þe bakbiter [499]
 ¶ After bakbytyng' cometh grucching' or murmuracioun.
 And som tyme it' springith of' Insapiens agayns god.
 and somtyme agains man.

[500] agayns god is it. whan a man grucchith agayn pyne of helle or agayns pouerte. or of losse of catel. or agayn reyn or tempest¹ or elles grucchiþ þat schrewes han prosperite or ellis þat goode men han aduersite. [501] and alle þese þinges schulde men suffre patiently. for þay come by rightful iuggement and ordinaunce of god [502] ¶ Som tyme cometh grucching of auarice as Iudas grucched azens þe Maudeleyn whan sche anoynted þe hed of oure lord ihū crist with hir precious oynement. [503] þis maner murmur is swich as man grucchith of goodnes þat himself doþ or þat oþer folk doon of here owne catel [504] ¶ Som tyme comeþ murmur of pride. as whan Symon þe pharise grucchid agayn þe maudeleyn whan sche approchid to ihū crist and wepte at his feet for hir synnes. [505] And somtyme it sourdith of enuye whan men discoueren a mannes harm þat was priue or bereþ him on hond þing þat is fals [506] ¶ Murmuryng eek is ofte among seruauntz þat grucchen whan here souerayns bidden hem to doon leeful þinges. [507] and for as moche as þay dar nouȝt openly wipstonde the comaundementz of here souerayns: ȝit wol thay sayn harm and grucche and murmure priuely for verray despit / [508] whiche wordes men clepe þe deuēles pater noster. þough so be þat þe deuel hadde neuer pater noster but þat lewed men calle it so [509] ¶ Som tyme it comeþ of Ire of priue hate þat norischeth rancour in herte as I schal declare. [510] þanne comeþ eek bitternes of herte. þorugh which bitternesse euery good deede of his neighebores semeth to him bitter and vnsauery [511] ¶ But þanne comeþ discord þat vnbyndeth alle maner of frendschipe. þanne comeþ scornynge. of [. no gap] his neighebor al do he neuer so wel. [512] þanne comeþ accusyng. as whan man seketh occasioun to annoyen his

neighebores which þat is lik' þe craft of þe deuel
 þat waytith boþe night and day to accuse vs alle
 [513] ¶ þanne comþ malignite þurgh which a man
 annoyeth his neighebor priuely if he may. [514] And if he
 not may algate his wikkid while schal nough't wante
 as for to brenne his hous priuely or empoysone or sleen
 his bestis priuely and semblable þinges

[*No break in the MS.*]

[515] ¶ *Remedium contra Inuidiam.* [*from the margin*]

Now wol I speke of þe remedies agayns þise foule
 þinges and þis foule synne of enuye ¶ First is þe loue
 of god principal and lounge of his neighebor as himself.
 ¶ Sopely þat oon ne may nought ben wipoute þat
 oþer [516] ¶ And truste wel þat in þe name of þy
 neighebour þou schalt vnderstonde þe name of þy
 broþer. For alle we haue oon fader fleisschly and oon
 mooder þat is to sain adam and eua and eek' oon fader
 spirituel & þat is god of heuen. [517] þy
 neghhebor artow holden for to loue. [.

.
 . . *no gap*] þat is to sayn boþe to sauacioun of lif and of
 soule [518] and more ouer. þou schalt loue hym in
 word and in benigne amonestyng' and chastising'
 & conforte him in his annoyes and praye for him with
 al þin herte [519] ¶ & in dede þou schalt loue him
 in such wise þat þou schalt do to him charite
 as þou woldist it were doon to þin oughne persone
 [520] and þerfore þou schalt doon him noon harme
 in wikked word ne damage him in his body ne in his catel
 ne in his soule by wicked entising' of ensample [521]
 ¶ þou schalt nouȝt desiren his wif/ ne noone of his þinges
 ¶ vnderstonde eek' þat in the name of þy neighebor is com-
 prehendid his enemy [522] ¶ Certes man schal loue his
 enemy by þe comaundement of god. and soply þy
 frend schalt þou loue in god [523] ¶ I sayde þin
 enemy schaltow loue for goddes sake by his comaunde-

ment for if it were resoun that man schulde hate his enemy For-soþe god nolde nouȝt receyue vs to his loue þat ben his enemys [524] ¶ Agains þre maner of wronges þat his enemy doþ to him he schal do þre þinges as þus. [525] agayns hate and rancour of herte he schal loue him in herte. Agayns chydyng and wicked wordes he schal pray for his enemye. agains wikked dede of his enemy he schal doon him bounte [526] ¶ For crist saith loueþ ȝoure enemyes and prayeþ for hem þat ȝow chacen and pursewen. and doþ bounte to hem þat ȝow haten. [.]
 *no gap.* [527] For sothely nature driueþ vs to loue oure frendes / and þar fay oure enemyes han more neede to loue þan oure frendes ¶ For sothely to hem þat more neede haue certis to hem schul men do goodnes. [528] And certis in þilke dede haue we by remembrance of þe loue of ihū crist þat dyed for his enemys [529] ¶ And in als moche as þilke loue is more greuous to parforme: so moche is þe more gret remedye & meryt ¶ And þerfore þe louyng of oure enemy hap confoundid the venym of þe deuel. [530] For right as þe deuel is confoundid by humilite: Right so is he woundid to þe deth by loue of oure enemy [531] ¶ Certes þanne is loue þe medicine þat castith out þe venym of enuye fro mannes hert. [532] the spices of þis part¹ schuln be more largely declared in here chapitres folwyng

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ **De Ira.** [*from the margin*]

[533]

After enuye wol I descryuen þe synne of Ire. For soþely who so hap enuye vpon his neighebor: anoon he wol comunly fynde him a matiere of wrappe in word or in dede agayns him to whom he hap envie. [534] and as wel comeþ Ire of pride

as of enuye ¶ For soþly he þat is proud or enuyous
is lightly wroth.

[535] þis synne of Ire after þe descryuynge of
seint austyn is wikked wille to ben auengid by
word or by dede [536] ¶ Ire afte þe philosofer is
þe feruent blood of man I-quiked in his hert þurgh
which he wolde harm to him þat him hatip [537] ¶ For
certes þe hert of man by eschawfyng and mornyng of
his blood waxith so trouble / þat he is out of alle
Iuggements of resoun [538] ¶ But 3e schal vnder-sonde
þat ire is in tuo maneres. þat oon of hem is good.
þat oþer is wikke [539] ¶ The good Ire is by
ialousy of goodnesse þurgh which a man is wroþ
wip wikkidnes. and [. *no gap*] þer-
fore saith a wise man þat ire is bet þan play. [540]
This Ire is with deboneirete. and it is wroþ wip-
oute bitternes. not wroth with þe man: but
wroþ wip þe mys dedes of þe man as saip þe
prophet dauid ¶ *Irascimini & nolite peccare.* &c [541] ¶ Now
vnderstonde þat wikked Ire is in tuo maners
þat is to sayn sodeyn Ire or hastif Ire wipoute
auysement and consenting of resoun. [542] the menyng
and þe sentence of þis is þat þe resoun of a man ne con-
sentith not to pilke sodein Ire. And þanne is it venial
[543] ¶ anoþer Ire is ful wicked þat comþ of
felony of herte auysed & cast biforn with wickid wille
to do vengeance and þerto his resoun consentith. and
sothely þis is deedly synne. [544] þis ire is so dis-
plesaunt to god þat it troublith his hous and chaceth þe
holy gost out of mannes soule and wastith and de-
stroyeth þe liknes of god. þat is to say þe vertu
þat is in mannes soule [545] and put in him þe like-
nes of þe deuel and bynymeth þe man fro god þat
is his rightful lord [546] ¶ This Ire is a ful greet
plesaunce to þe deuel. for it is þe deueles fornays
þat is eschaufid wip þe fuyr of helle [547] ¶ For certes

right^t so as fuyr is more mighty to destroye erpely
 þinges þan eny oþer element^t: Right^t so Ire is mighty to
 destroye alle spirituel þinges [548] ¶ loke how þat^t
 fuyr of smale gledis þat^t ben almost^t dede vnder asshen
 wolden quiken agayn whan þay ben touched [. . . .

 *no gap in the MS.*] ¹by pride þat^t is couered in
 mannes herte [549] ¶ For certes fuyr may nouzt come
 out^t of no þing^t [. *no gap*]
 naturelly as fuyr is drawe out^t of flintes with steel
 [550] ¶ Right^t so as pride is often tyme mater of Ire:
 Right^t so is Rancour norice and keper of Ire [551] ¶ Ther is
 a maner tree as saip seint Isydre . þat^t whan men
 maken fuyr of pilke tree and couer þe colis wip
 asshen: soþly þe fuyr of it^t wol lasten al a 3er or more.
 [552] And right^t so fareþ it^t of rancour whan it^t oones is
 conceyued in þe hertis of som men: certein it wol
 lasten fro oon estren day vntil anoþer
 ester day and more. [553] but^t certis pilke man
 is ful fer fro þe mercy of god al þilke while

[554] ¶ In þis forsaide deueles fornays þer
 forgen þre schrewes. pride þat^t ay blowith & encresith
 þe fuyr by chidyng^t and wickid wordis [555] ¶ þanne
 stont^t enuye and blowith þe hoote Iren vpon þe hert/
 of man wip a paire of longe tonges of rancour
 [556] and þanne þe sinne of contumelie or
 strif and cheste and baterith and forgeth by vileyns
 repreuynge [557] ¶ Certes þis cursed synne annoyeth
 boþe to þe man himsilf^t and eek^t to his neighebor
 ¶ For soþely almost^t al þe harm þat^t eny man
 doth to his neighebour comeþ þurgh wrapþe [558] ¶ For
 certis outrageous wrapþe doþ al þat^t euer þe
 deuyl him comaundeth. For he ne spareþ neyþer
 crist^t ne his moodir. [559] and in his out-
 rage anger and Ire. allas ful many oon
 at þat^t tyme felith in his herte ful wikkedly

bope of crist and eek of alle his halwes. [560] Is nat þis a cursed vice: yis certis. it bynymeth fro man his witte and his resoun and al his deboneire lyf spirituel þat scholde kepen his soule [561] ¶ Certes it bynymeth eek goddis dewe lordschipe and þat is mannes soule. and þe loue of his neighebor. hit stryueþ eek alday agayns troupe ¶ It reueth him eek þe quite of his hert and subuertith his herte and his soule

[562] ¶ Of ire cometh þese stynkyng engendures ¶ First hate þat is old wrappe discord þurgh which a man forsakith his olde frend þat he hath loued ful longe. [563] and þanne cometh werre and euery maner of wronge þat man doth to his neighebor in body or catel [564] ¶ Of þis cursed synne of Ire cometh eek manslaughter. And vnderstonde wel þat homicide þat is man-slaughter is in diuers wise. ¶ Som maner of homicide is spirituel and som is bodily. [565] ¹Spirituel manslaughter is in sixe þinges ¶ First by hate as saith seint Iohan ¶ he þat hateþ his broþer is an homicide. [566] homicide is eek by bak-bytyng of whiche bakbiters saith Salamon þat þay haue twaye swerdes with whiche þay slen here neighebers. For soþely as wikke is to bynyme his good name as his lif. [567] homicidy is eek in ȝeuyng of wikkid counseil by fraude as for to ȝeue counseil to areyse wicked and wrongful custumes and taliages [568] of whiche saith Salomon ¶ leoun roryng and bere hungry ben like to þe cruel lordschipes in wiþholdyng or abbrigging of þe schipe or the hyre or þe wages of seruantes or ellis in vsure or in withdrawyng of almes of pore folk [569] For whiche þe pore man saith ¶ Feedith him þat almost dyeth for hunger. for soþely but if þou feede him: þou slest him and eek þese ben dedly synnes. [570] bodily manslaughter is. whan þou sleest him wiþ þy tonge in oþer manere as whan þou comaundist to slen a man or elles ȝiuest counseil to slee a

man [571] ¶ *Manslauȝter* in dede is in foure maneres
 ¶ That oon is by lawe. Right as a Iustice dampnith
 him þat is coupable to þe deth. But let þe Iustice
 be war þat he do it rightfully and þat he do it nought
 for delit to spille blood; but for keping of rightwis-
 nes [572] ¶ *Anoper* homicide is doon for
 necessite. as whan a man slep *anoper* him defendaunt.
 and þat he may noon *oper* wise eschape fro his
 deth. [573] but certeynly if he may escape wip-
 oute slaughter of his aduersarie and sleth him
 he doth synne and he schal bere penaunce as for dedly
 synne. [574] ¶ Eke if a man by caas or aduenture schete
 an arwe or cast a stoon wip which he slep a man;
 he is an homicide. [575] Eke if a womman by negligence
 ouerlye hir child in hir sleping it is homicide and
 deedly synne [576] ¶ Eke whan man distourbith con-
 cepcioun of a child and makith a womman ouper bareyn
 by drinke of venenous herbis þurgh whiche sche may
 nouȝt conceyue or sleth a child by drynkes. or
 elles putteþ certeyn material pinges in secre
 place to slee þe child. [577] or elles doþ vnkyndely
 synne by which man or womman schedith here nature
 in ma[n] or in place þer as þe child may nought be con-
 ceuyed. or ellis if a womma[n] haue conceyued and hurt
 herself and sleth þe child ȝit is it homycidie
 [578] ¶ What say we eek of wommen þat morden
 here children for drede of worldly schame. Certes an
 horrible homicide. [579] homicide is eek if a man ap-
 proche to a womman by desir of lechery þurgh þe which þe
 child is perischt or elles smitith a womman wytyngly
 þurgh which sche sleth hir child. alle þese ben homi-
 cides [. *no gap*] [580] ¶ ȝit cometh þer of
 Ire many mo synnes as wel in word as in werk &
 þought. As he þat arettith vpon god and blamith god
 of ping of which he is himself gulty or despisith
 god and alle his halwes as doon þese cursed hasardours

in diuers cuntrees. [581] þis cursed synne don þay
whan þay felen in here herte ful wickidly of god and
his halwes [582] ¶ also whan þay treten vnreuerently
þe sacrament^t of þe auter. þilke synne is so gret^t
þat^t vnneþe may it^t be relessed but^t þat^t þe mercy of
god passith alle his werkes. and is so gret and so
benigne [583] ¶ Thanne cometh of Ire attrý anger
whan a man is scharly amonested in his schrifte to for-
lete synne: [584] þanne wol he be angry and
answere hokerly and angrily and defenden or excusen
his synne by vnstedfastnesse of his fleisch. or elles he
dede it to holde companye with his felawes. or
ellis he saith þe fend entised him. [585] or elles he
dide it^t for his ȝouthe. or ellis his complexioun is so
corrageous þat^t he may not^t forbere. or ellis it is
desteny. as he saith. [.
. . . *no gap*] it^t cometh him of gentilesce of his auncetrie
and semblable þinges [586] ¶ Alle þese maner of folk^t
so wrappen hem in here synnes þat^t þay wol nouȝt^t
deliuer hemself ¶ For soþely no wight^t þat^t excuseth
him wilfully of his synne may nouȝt / be deliuered of his
synne til þat^t he mekely biknoweth his synne. [587]
¶ After þis þanne [. *no gap*] þat^t is expres
agayns þe comaundement³ of god & þis bifallith often
of angir and of Ire [588] ¶ God saith. þou schalt^t not^t
take þe name of þy lord god in vayn or in ydil. ¶ Also
oure lord ihū crist^t saith by þe word of seint^t. *Mathew*
[. *no gap in the MS.*] [589] ¶ Ne wol ȝe
not^t swere in alle manere. neither by
heuen for it is goddes trone. ne by þe eorþe for it^t is þe
benche of his feet^t. ne by ierusalem: for it is þe cite of
a gret^t king^t. ne by þin heed: þou may nouȝt^t
make an her whit^t ne blak^t. [590] but^t sayeth by ȝoure
word ȝe. ȝe. and nay. nay. and what^t it^t is more: it / is
of euel. þus saith ihū crist^t [591] ¶ For cristes sake swereth
not^t so synfully in dismembring^t of crist^t. for cristes sake. bi

soule. ¹herte. boones and body. For certes it' semeþ þat 3e þenke þat' cursed Iewes ne dismembrit' nought ynough. þe precious persone of' crist'. but' 3e disembre him more. [592] and if' so be þat' þe lawe compelle 3ow to swere. þanne reule 3ow after þe lawe of' god in 3oure swering' as saip. *Ieremie capitulo .iiij^{to}* [. no gap in the MS.] ¶ Thou schalt' kepe þre condiciouns. þou schalt' swere in troupe in doom and in rightwisnes [593] þis is to sayn. þou schalt' swere soth. For euery lesyng' is agayns crist'. for crist' is verray troupe and þink' wel þis þat' euery gret' swerer not' compellid lawfully to swere þe wonder schal not' departe fro his hous whil he vseth such vnleful sweringe [594] ¶ þou schalt' eek' swere in doom whan þou art' constreigned by þy domesman to witnesse þe troupe. [595] eek' þou schalt' not' swere for enuye ne for fauour ne for meede but / for rightwisnesse for declaring' of' it' to worschip of' god and helping' of' þin euen-cristen [596] and þerfore euery man þat' takip goddes name in ydil or falsly swerip with his mouth or elles takip on him þe name of' crist' and callith himself a cristen man and lyueth agayn cristes lyuyng' and his teching' alle þay take cristes name in ydel [597] ¶ loke eek' what' saith seint' peter *Actuum* ca°. .iiij^{to} ¶ Non est aliud nomen sub celo &c' ¶ Ther is noon oþer name saith seint' peter vnder heuen ne 3euen to noon men in which þay mowe be saued þat' is to sayn but in þe name of' ihū crist' [598] ¶ Tak' heede eek' how þe precious name of' crist' as saith seint' poule ad philippenses .ij°. In nomine ihū &c' ¶ That' in þe name of' ihū euery kne of' heuenly creatures or erþely or of' helle schulde bowe and [. no gap in the MS.] tremble to heeren it nempned. [599] ¶ Thanne semeþ it' þat' men þat' sweren so horribly by his

blessed name þat þay despise it more bodyly
þan dede þe cursed Iewes or elles þe deuel þat
tremblith whan he heerith his name

[600] ¶ Now certis sith þat swering but it be
lawfully doon is so heihly defendid: moche wors is
forswering falsly and ȝit needeles

[601] what say we eek of hem þat deliten hem
in swering and holden it a gentry or manly dede / to
swere grete othis. and what of hem þat of verray
vsage / ne cessen nouȝt to swere grete opis al be not þe cause
worþ a strawe: certes þis is horrible synne [602]
¶ Sweryng sodeynly wipout anysement is eek a
synne [603] ¶ But let vs now go to þilke horrible sweryng
of adiuracioun and coniuraciouns as ¹doon þese false en-
chauntours or nigromanciens in bacines ful or
in a bright sword in a churche or in a fuyr or in þe schulder
bon of a scheep [604] ¶ I can not sayn but þat þay
doon cursedly and dampnably agains þe
faith of holy chirche

[605] what say we of hem þat bilieuen on
diuinailes as by flight or by nois of briddes or of
bestes or by sort by geomancie. by dremes. by chirkyng
of dores or crakking of howses. by gnawying of rattis
and such maner wrecchidnes [606] ¶ Certes al þis
þing is defended by god and holy chirche for
whiche þay ben accursed til þay come to amendement
þat on such filthe bisetten here bileue. [607] Charmes
for woundes or malady of men or of bestes if þay
take eny effect. it may be paradventure þat god suffreþ
hit for folk schulde ȝeue þe more faip and reuerence to
his name

[608] ¶ Now wol I speke of lesynge whiche gener-
ally is fals signifiante of word in entent to desceyuen
his euencristen [609] Som lesyng is of whiche
þer cometh noon auauntage to noon wight and som lesyng
torneþ to þe ease or profit of som man.

and to damage of an oþer man [610] ¶ An oþer lesyng^t for to saue his lif or his catel [. *no gap*] cometh of delit/ for to lye. in which delit^t þay wol forge a long^t tale and paynte it with alle circumstaunces wher as þe ground of þe tale is fals [611] ¶ Som lesyng^t cometh. For he wolde susteyne his word ¶ Som lesyng^t cometh of rechelesnes wipoute auisement^t and semblable þinges

[612] ¶ lat^t vs now touche þe vice of flaterie which cometh not^t gladly but for drede or for coueitise [613] ¶ Flaterie is generally wrongful preysing^t. Flaterers ben þe deueles norices þat^t norisshen his children wip mylk^t of þe losingerie. [614] forsoþe Salamon saith þat^t flaterie is worse þan detraccioun. for som tyme detraccioun makith an hawteyn man be þe more humble for he dredith detraccioun ¶ But certes flaterie makith a man to enhaunsen his hert/ and his countenaunce [615] ¶ Flaterers ben þe deueles enchauntours. For þay maken man to wene of himself þat^t he is like to þat^t he is nouȝt^t like. [616] þay ben like Iudas þat^t bitraised [. *no gap*] to selle him to his enemy þat^t is þe deuel [617] ¶ Flaterers ben þe deueles chapeleyns þat^t singen ay. placebo. [618] I rekene flaterers in þe vices of Ire. For ofte tyme if^t oon man be wroþ wip an oþer. þanne wol he flaterre som man to mayntene him in his querel

[619] Speke we now of such cursyng^t as cometh of Irous hert^t malisoun generally may be said euery maner power of harm. such ¹cursyng^t bireueþ man fro þe regne of god as saith seint^t poule [620] ¶ And ofte tyme such cursyng^t wrongfully retourneþ agayn to hym þat^t curseth as þat^t retourneþ agayn to his owne nest^t. [621] and ouer alle þinges men oughten eschewe to cursen here oughne children and ȝiue to þe deuel here engendrure as ferforth as in hem is Certis it is gret^t peril and gret^t synne

[622] ¶ let vs þanne speke of chydyng and reproche
whiche þat ben ful grete woundes in mannes hert [. . .

. *no gap in the MS.*]

[623] ¶ For certis vnneþe may a man plainly ben
accordid with him þat him openly reuyled and
reproved and disclaundrid. þis is a ful grisly synne
as crist saith in þe gospel. [624] and takith keep now
þat he þat reproueþ his neighþor. ouþer he reproueþ
him by som harm of peyne. [.

[625]. *no gap in the MS.*]

þanne tornith þe reproef to ihū crist. For peyne is
sent by þe rightwis sonde of god and by his suffraunce
be it meselrie or many oþer maladies. [626] and if he
repreue him vncharitably as þou holour þou dronk-
elewe harlot and so forth þanne aperteyneth þat
to þe reioysing of þe deuel þat euer haþ ioie
þat men doon synne. [627] And certis chiding may
nought come but out of a vileins herte ¶ For after þe
abundaunce of þe herte spekeþ þe mouth ful ofte.

[628] and 3e schal vnderstonde þat loke by any way
whan any man schal chastise anoþer þat he be war
fro chyding or repreuyng. For trewely but he be
war he may ful lightly quiken þe fuyr of anger and of
wrappe which þat he schulde quenchen: and par auenture
slep þat he mighte chaste with benignite. [629] for as saiþ salamon ¶ The amiable tonge is
þe tree of lif þat is to sayn of lif espirituel. and
sopely dislaue tonge slep þe spirit of him [. . .

. *no gap*] þat is reproued [630] ¶ lo

what saith seint augustyn ¶ Ther is no þing so lik þe
fendes child as he þat ofte chideþ ¶ Seint poule seiþ
eek I seruauñt of god bihoueth nouȝt to chide. [631] and
þough þat chiding be a vileins þing bitwixe alle
maner folk/ 3it is it certes more vncouenable
bitwix a man and his wif. For þer is neuer rest

And þerfore saith Salamon ¶ An hous þat is vncovered
& droppynge and a chidyng wyf ben like
[632] a man þat is in dropping hous in many
partes þough he eschewe þe dropping in oon place:
it droppeþ on him in anoþer place ¶ So farith it by
a chydinge wyf: But sche chide him in oon place: sche
wol chide him in anoþer [633] ¶ And þerfore better is
a morsel of bred with ioye þan an hous ful of
delices with chydinge seiþ Salamon [634] ¹¶ Seint
poul saith ¶ O ȝe wommen be ȝe sugettis to ȝoure
housbondes as bihoueþ in god. And ȝe men loueth ȝoure
wyues ad Colocenses iij^o.

[635] ¶ Afterward speke we of scornynge which is a
wikked þing and sinful and namely whan he scornith a man
for his goode workes [636] ¶ For certes suche scornes
faren lik þe foule toode þat may nought endure þe
soote smel of þe vine roote whan it
florischith. [637] þese scornors ben partyng felawes
wip þe deuel. For þay han ioye whan þe deuel
wynneth and sorwe whan he leseth
[638] ¶ Thay ben aduersaries of Ihū crist. for
þay haten þat he loueth þat is to saye sauacioun of soule

[639] Speke we now of wikked counseil ¶ For he þat
wickid counseil ȝiueþ. he is a traytour. for he deceyueþ
him þat trusteþ in him ¶ vt achitofel ad absolonem
¶ But napeles ȝet is his wikkid counseil first aȝens him-
self [640] ¶ For as saith the wise man ¶ Euery fals
lyuyng haþ þis proprete in him self. þat he þat
wil annoye anoþer man: he annoyeth first himself.
[641] ¶ and men schul vnderstonde þat men schulde nought
take his counseil of fals folk ne of angry folk/ [. . .
. . . .] ne of folk þat louen specially to moche her
oughne profyt ne in to moche worldly. folk. namely in coun-
selyng of soules

[642] Now comeþ þe synne of hem þat sown and
maken discord amonges folk which is a synne þat/

crist^t hateþ outrely. and no wonder is. for god died
for to make concord. [643] and more schame do þay to
crist^t þan dede þay þat^t him crucifiede ¶ For god
loueth bettre þat^t frendschipe be amonges folk^t ¶ þanne
he dide his owne body which þat/ he ȝaf^t for vnite.
þerfore ben þay likned to þe deuel þat^t euer ben
aboute to make discord

[644] ¶ Now comith þe sinne of^t double tonge. suche
as speken faire biforn folk^t and wikkedly bihynde or
elles þay make semblaunt as þough þay speke of
good entencioun or ellis in game & play and ȝit^t þay
speke in wikked entent^t

[645] ¶ Now comeþ þe wreying^t of^t counseil þurgh
which a man is famed ¶ Certes vnnethe may he restore þat^t
damage

[646] ¶ Now comeþ manace þat^t is an open foly. For
he þat^t ofte man[a]ceth he threttith more þan he may
parfourme ful ofte tyme

[647] ¶ Now comeþ Idel wordes þat^t is wiþoute
profyt^t of^t him þat^t spekith þo wordes and eek^t of^t him
þat^t herkeneth þo wordes. or elles ydel wordes ben
þo þat^t ben needeles or wiþouten entent^t of^t naturel
profyt^t [648] and al be it^t þat^t ydil wordes ben som
tyme venial synne^t ȝit^t schulde men doute hem. For we
schuln ȝiue rekenynge of^t hem bifore ¹god

[649] ¶ Now comith iangeling^t þat/ may nouȝt^t be wiþ-
oute synne as saith Salamon ¶ It^t is a signe of^t apert^t
folie [650] and þerfore a philosopre whan
men askid him how men schulde plesen þe poeple
and he answerde ¶ Do many goode werkes. and spek/ fewe
iangeles

[651] ¶ After þis comeþ þe synne of^t iapers þat^t
ben þe deueles apes For þay maken folk^t to laughen at
here iapes or iaperie as folk^t doon at/ þe gaudes of^t an ape /
Suche iapes defendith seint^t poule [652] ¶ Loke how
þat^t vertuous and holy wordes conforten hem

þat' trauailen in þe seruice of crist! Right' so conforten
þe violent' wordes and knakkis and iaperies hem þat'
trauayle in þe seruice of þe deuyll [653] ¶ These ben
þe synnes þat/ comeþ of [. *no gap*] Ire
and of oþer synnes

[*No break in the MS.*]

[654]

¶ *Remedium contra Iram*

Remedye agayns ire is a vertue þat' men
clepe mansuetude. þat' is deboneirte. And
eek' anoper vertue þat' men clepe pacience or
sufferaunce.

[655] debonairete wiþdrawith and restreigneth
þe stiringes and þe moeuynge of mannys corrage in his
herte in such manere þat' þai ne skip not' out' by
anger ne by Ire [656] ¶ Suffraunce suffriþ swetely al
þe annoyaunce and þe wronges þat' men doon to man
outward [657] ¶ Seint Ierom saiþ þus of debonairete.
þat it doþ noon harm to no wight' ne saith ne for noon
harm þat' men doon ne sayn. he ne eschaufith nought'
agayns his resoun [658] ¶ This vertu comiþ som tyme of
nature ¶ For as saith þe philosopher man is a quik'
þing' by nature and trefable to goodnesse
¶ But' whan debonairete is enformed of grace! þan is
it' þe more worþ

[659] ¶ Pacience þat' is anoper remedie. agayns Ire
is a vertu þat' suffreth swetely euery mannes goodnes
as is not' wroþ for noon harm þat' is doon to him.
[660] þe philosopher saith þat' pacience is þilke
vertue þat' suffriþ deboneirly alle þe outrages of
aduersite and euery wickid word [661] ¶ This vertue
makip a man lik' to god and makith him goddes
oughne dere child as saiþ crist ¶ þis vertu destroyep
þin enemy and þerfore saith þe wise man ¶ If þou
wolt' venquisch þin enemy lerne to suffre [662] ¶ And
þou schalt' vnderstonde þat' man suffriþ foure maners

of greuauces in outward pinges. agains whiche he moot haue foure maners of pacience

[663] ¶ The firste greuaunce is of wicked wordes. þilke suffred Ihū crist wipoute grucching ful paciently whan þe iewes despised him and reproued him ful ofte. [664] suffre þou þerfore paciently ¶ For þe wise man saiþ ¶ If þou striue with a fool. þough þe fool be wroþ or þough he laughhe algate þou schalt haue no rest [665] ¶ That oþer greuaunce outward is to haue damage of þi catel: þer agayn suffred crist ful paciently whan he was despoylid of al þat he had in his lif and þat nas but his cloþis [666] ¶ The þridde greuaunce is. a man to haue harm in his body. þat suffred crist ful paciently in al his passioun [667] ¶ The ferþe greuaunce is in outrageous labour in werkis wherfore I say þat folk þat maken here seruauant to trauaile to greuously or out of tyme as on haly dayes. soþely þay doon greet synne [668] ¶ Here against suffred crist ful paciently and taughte vs pacience whan he bar vpon his blisful schulder þe croys vpon which he schulde suffre despitous deth. [669] here may men lerne to be patient. For certes nought oonly cristen ben patient for þe loue of ihū crist and for guerdoun of þe blisful life þat is perdurable But þe olde paynymes þat neuer were cristen comaundedin and vseden þe vertu of pacience

[670] ¶ A philosopher vpon a tyme þat wolde haue bete his disciple for his grete trespas. For which he was gretly amoeued and brought a 3erde to scoure þe child. [671] & whan þe child saugh þe 3erde: he sayde to his maister ¶ what þenke 3e to do ¶ I wolde bete þe quod þe maister for þi correccioun [672] Forsoþe quod þe child. 3e oughte first correcte 3oure silf þat han left al 3oure pacience for þe gilt of a child [673] ¶ For soþe quod þe maister al wepyng. þou

saist^t soth. haue þou þe 3erde my deere sone and correcte me for myn impacience. [674] Of^t pacience cometh obedience. þurgh which a man is obedient^t to crist/ and to alle hem to which him oughte to be obedient^t in crist. [675] and vnderstonde wel þat^t obedience is parfyt^t. whan a man doþ gladly & hastily with good herte outrely al þat^t he scholde do [676] ¶ Obedience is generally to parforme þe doctrine of god and of his soueraignes to whiche him oughte to ben obeissant^t in alle rightwisnes.

[No break in the MS.]

[677]

After þe synne of enuye and Ire. now wol I speke of [. . . no gap] accidie. For enuye blendith þe hert of a man and Ire troublith a man and accidie makith him heuy. þoughtful. and wrawe [678] ¶ Enuye and Ire maken bitternes in herte. which bitternesse is mooder of accidie and bynimit^t þe loue of alle goodnes. þanne is accidie þe anguische of trouble hert^t and seint^t augustyn saith [. no gap] [679] ¶ Certes þis is a dampnable synne. For it^t doþ wrong^t to Ihū crist^t in as moche as it bynymeþ þe seruice þat^t we ought^t to do to crist^t wiþ alle diligence as saip Salomon [680] ¶ But^t accidie doþ noon such diligence. he doþ alle þing^t wiþ anoy and with drawenes. slaknes and excusacioun. and with ydelnes & vnlust^t for which þe book^t saith ¶ Accursed be he þat^t doþ þe seruice of god negligently [681] [. no gap] enemy to euery astat^t of man ¶ For certes þestat^t of [. [682] . . . no gap in the MS.] Innocence. as was þastate of adam biforn þat^t he fel in to synne in which estate he is holden to worche as in heryng^t and honouryng^t of god [683] ¶ Anoper astat^t is þe state of sinful man. in which estate. men ben holden

to labore in praying to god for amendement of her synnes. and þat he wolde graunte hem to rise of here synnes [684] ¶ Anoþer estaat is þestate of which he is holde to werkis of penitence and certes to alle þese þinges is accidie enuye contrarie for it loueþ no busynes at al [685] ¶ Now certis þis foule synne accidie is eek a ful gret enemy to þe lifode of þe body For it hath no purueaunce aȝens temperel necessite. for it forslowthith and forsluggith and destroyeth alle goodes temporels by rechelesnes

[686] ¶ The ferþe þing is þat accidie is like hem þat ben in þe peyne of helle by cause of her slouþe and of her heuynes For þay þat ben dampned ben so bounde þat þay may nought wel do ne wel þenke [687] ¶ Of accidie cometh first þat a man is annoyed and encombrid for to do eny goodnes. and makith that god haþ abhominacioun of such accidie as saith seint Iohan.

[688] ¶ Now comeþ slouþe þat wol suffre noon hardnes ne no penaunce For sopely slouþe is so tendre and so delicat as saith Salomon þat he wol suffre noon hardnes ne penaunce. and þerfore he schendeth al þat he doth [689] ¶ Agayns þis roten hertid synne of accidie and of slouthe schulden men exercise hemself to do goode werkes and manly and vertuously cacchin corrage wel to doo. þink- ing þat oure lord ihū crist quiteþ euery good dede be it neuer so lyte. [690] ¶ Vsage of labour is a ful greet þing. for it makith as saiþ seint Bernard þe laborer to haue stronge armes and harde synewes ¶ And slouthe maketh hem feble and tendre [691] ¶ Thanne comeþ drede to bygynne to werke eny goode deedes: For certes what þat is enclined to don synne him þinkith it is so gret emprise for to vndertake to doon werkes of goodnes [692] / as [.]

.
.
. *no gap*] saip seynt gregory

[693] ¶ Now comeþ wanhope þat is despair of þe mercy of god þat comeþ som tyme of to moche outrageous sorwe ¹and som tyme of to moche drede ymagynynge þat he haþ do so moche synne þat it wil not auaile him þough he wolde repent him and forsake synne. [694] þurgh which despeir or drede he abundith al his herte to alle maner synne as seith seint augustin. [695] whiche dampnable synne if þat it continue vnto his lyues ende it is cleped synnyng^t of þe holy gost. [696] This horrible synne is so perilous. þat he þat is despaired þer is no felonye ne no synne þat he doutith for to do. as schewed wel by Iudas. [697] Certes aboue alle synnes. þan is þis synne most displesant to crist and most aduersarie [698] sothely he þat despisith him is like þe coward campioyn recreaunt þat seith recreaunt wiþoute neede. allas allas needeles is he recreaunt and needeles despaired [699] ¶ Certes þe mercy of god is euer redy to þe penitent and is aboue alle his werkes. [700] allas can not a man byþenk^t him on þe gospel of seint luk/ wher as crist saith þat as wel schal þer be ioie in heuen vpon a synful man þat doþ penitence as vpon nynety and nyne þat ben rightful men þat [. *no gap*] needen no penitence [701] ¶ Ioke forþer in þe same gospel þe ioie and þe fest of þe goode man þat had lost his sone. whan þe sone with repentaunce was torned to his fader [702] ¶ Can not þay remembre eek þat as saip seint luk^t xxiiij°. how þat þe þef þat was hangid biside ihū crist sayde ¶ lord remembre of me whan þou comest in to þy regne [703] ¶ Forsoþe saith crist. to day þou schalt be wiþ me in paradis [704] ¶ Certis þer is noon so horrible synne of

man þat it may in his lif be destroyed with penitence
 þorugh vertu of passioun of þe deth of crist
 [705] ¶ Allas what needith it man þanne to be despaired
 sith þat his mercy is so redy and large. aske and haue
 [706] ¶ Thanne comeþ sompnolent þat is sluggish
 slumbring which makip a man ben heuy and dul in
 body and in soule. and þis synne comeþ of slouþe
 [707] and certes þe tyme þat by way of resoun man
 schulde nouȝt slepe þat is by þe morwe but if þer were
 cause resonable [708] For soþely þe morwe tyde is
 most/ couenable to a man to say his prayers and for
 to þenk vpon his god and to honoure god and to
 ȝeue almes to þe pore þat first comeþ in þe name
 of crist [709] ¶ lo what saith Salamon. ¶ who-so wol
 by þe morwe arise and seeke me schal fynde
 [710] ¶ þan comeþ negligence that/
 rekkith of no þing and how þat ignoraunce be
 moder of alle harm: Certis neeglence is þe norice
 [711] ¶ Neeglence dop no force whan he schal doon
 a þing whethir he doo it wel or baddely

[712] ¶ Of þe remedy of þese tuo synnes as saith
 þe wise man ¶ That he þat dredith god he sparith nouȝt
 to do þat him ought to don. [713] and he þat loueth
 god wol do diligence to plesse god by his werkis
 and abounde himself with alle his mightes wel for to doon
 [714] ¶ Thanne comith ydelnes þat is þe ȝate of alle
 harmes. and ydil man is like an hous þat haþ noone
 walles. þe deueles may entre on euery syde or schete
 at him at discourte by temptaciouns on euery syde
 [715] ¶ This ydelnes is þe thurrok/ of alle wickid
 vileyns þoughtes and of alle iangles tryfles and of
 alle ordure [716] ¶ Certes þe heuen is ȝeuen to hem þat
 wol laboure and nouȝt to ydil folk ¶ Eke dauid saith
 That / þay ne ben not in þe labour of men ne þay schul
 not be wiped with men þat is to sain in purgatorie

¶ *Omnium ma-
 lorum mater est
 negligencia*

[717] ¶ Certes þanne semeth it þat þay schal be tormentid wip þe deuel in helle but if þay don penitence

[718] ¶ þanne comith þe synne þat men clepe tarditas. as whan a man is so latrede or tarying^r er he wil torne to god. and certis þat is a gret foly. he is like him þat fallith in to þe dicke and wol not arise / [719] And þis vice cometh of a fals hope þat he þinkith he schal lyue longe. but þat hope fayleþ ful ofte

[720] ¶ þanne comith laches. þat is he when he bigynneth any good werk^r anoon he wol forlete it and stynte as doon þay þat/ han eny wight to gouerne. and ne take of hem no more keep anoon as þay fynde eny contrarie or eny anoy [721] ¶ þese ben þe newe schepherdes þat leten her schep wityngely go renne to þe wolf þat is in þe breres or don no force of her oughne gouernaunce. [722] Of þis cometh pouert^r and destruccioun boþe of spirituel and of temperel þinges ¶ Thanne cometh a maner of coldenesse þat freseþ al þe hert^r of man [723] þanne cometh vndeocioun þurgh which a man is so blunt & as saith seint Bernard he haþ such a langour in soule þat he may neyþeir rede ne synge in holy chirche ne heere ne þinke ondeuocioun in holy chirche ne trauayle with his hondes in no good werk^r þat nys þo him vnsauory and al [724] þanne waxith he slow and slombry and soone wol he be wroþ and soone is enclined to hate and to enuye [725] ¶ þanne comith þe synne of worldly sorwe such as is clepid tristicia þat sleth man as saith seint poule [726] ¶ For certis such sorwe werkith to þe deth of þe soule. & of þe body also. For þer of cometh þat a man is anoyed of his oughne lif. [727] which sorwe schorteþ ful ofte þe lif of a man or þat his tyme is come by way of kynde

[No break in the MS.]

[728] ¶ Agains þis horrible ¹synne of accidie and þe
 braunches of þe same þer is a vertu þat is cleped
 fortitudo or strengþe þat is affeccioun þurgh
 which a man despiseth alle noyous þinges [729] ¶ This
 vertu is so mighty & so vigurous þat it dar wipstonde
 mighty and wisely kepe himself from perils þat ben
 wicked and wrastil agains þe assautes of þe deuel.
 [730] For it enhaunsith and enforceþ þe soule. Right as
 accidie abateth it and makith it feble. For þis fortitudo
 may endure by long sufferaunce þe trauailes þat ben
 conuenables

[731] ¶ This vertu haþ many spices. þe
 first is cleped magnanimitie þat is to sayn gret corrage.
 For certis þer bihoueþ gret corrage agains accidie lest
 þat it ne swolwe not þe soule by þe synne of sorwe or
 destroye it by wanhope [732] ¶ This vertu makith
 folk vndertake harde þinges and greuours þinges
 by his owne wille willfully and resonably. [733] and for
 als moche as þe deuel fighteth agaynst a man more by
 queyntise and by sleight þan by strengþe: þerfore many a man
 schal aȝeinstonde him by witte. and by resoun and by dis-
 crecioun. [734] Thanne is þer þe vertu of faith and
 hope in god and in his seintes to eschew. and to acomplise
 þe goode werkes in þe whiche he purposith fermely
 to continue. [735] thanne comeþ seurte or sikernes
 and þat is whan a man doutith no trauaile in tyme
 comyng of good werk þat a man haþ bygonne
 [736] ¶ þanne comeþ magnificence þat is to say whan
 a man doth and parformith grete werkes of goodnesse
 þat he hath bygonne. and þat is þende why þat men schulden
 do goode werkes. for in þe accomplising of grete goode
 werkes lip þe grete guerdoun. [737] þanne is þer
 constaunce þat is stablenes of corrage and þis schulde
 ben in herte by stedefast faip. and in mouthe. and in

berying. and in cheer and in deede. [738] eek' þer ben
mo special remedies agayns accidie, in dyuers werkis
and in consideracioun of þe peyne of helle and of þe
ioye of heuen and in þe trust' of þe hyhe grace of þe holy
gost'. þat' wil ȝeue him might' to parforme his good
entent.

[*No break in the MS.*]

[739]

De Auaricia [*from margin*]

After accidie! I wil speke of auarice and of
coueytise. Of whiche synnes For sothely whan
saith sein poule þat' þe roote of alle eueles &
harmes is coueytise/ [740] and þat' þe hert' of
man is confoundid in it self' and troublid and þat' þe
soule hap' lost' þe comfort of god.' þanne seekith he an
ydel solas of worldly þinges.

[741] ¹¶ Auarice after þe descripcioun of seint' austyn.
is a likerousnes in hert' to haue erþely þinges
[742] ¶ Some oþer folk' sayn þat' auarice is for to
purchase many erþely þinges and no þing' ȝeue
to hem þat' han neede [743] ¶ And vnderstonde þat'
auarice ne stont' not' oonly in lond ne in catel! But' som
tyme in science and in glorie and eny maner
outrageous þinges is auarice [744] ¶ And
þe difference bytwixe auarice and coueytise is þis.
Coueytise is for to coueyte suche þinges as þou
hast' not' [.]

. *no gap in the MS.* [745] ¶ And
auarice is a synne þat' is ful dampnable. For al holy
writ curseth it' and spekith agayn þat' vice. for it doþ
wrong' to Iħū crist'. [746] For it bireueth him þe loue
þat' men to him owen and turnith it' bakward agains
al resoun. [747] and makith þat' þe auarous man
hath more hope in his catel þan in iħū crist'. and
[.]

. *no gap in the MS.* [748] þerfore saith

seint poule ad *Ephesios*. þat an auerous man is
þe þrldom of ydolatrie

[749] ¶ what difference is þer bitwen an ydolaster and
an auarous man. but þat an ydolaster þer aduenture
hadde but a mawmet/ [.
.
no gap] [750] ¶ and certes þe synne of mawmetrie is
þe firste þing þat god defendith in þe ten comaunde-
mentz as berip witnes in *exodo capitulo* [751] þou
schalt/ haue noone false goddes biforn me. ne þouschalt make
to the no graue þing. thus is he an auerous man þat
loueth his tresor toforn god ¶ And an ydolaster [752] þurgh
his cursed synne of auarice and coueytise comen þese
harde lordschipes þurgh whiche thay ben distreyned
by talliaiges custumes and cariages more þan here
duete of resoun is. and elles take þay of here bonde
men amercimentes whiche mighte more resonably ben
callid extorcious þan mercymendis. [753] of whiche
mersymendis and raunsonyng of bonde men some
lordes stywardes seyn þat it is rightful. For as moche as
a cherl hap no temperel þing þat it nys his lordes
as þay sayn [754] ¶ But certes þise lordschipes doon
wrong þat bireuen here bonde men þinges þat þay
neuer 3aue hem. Augustine [. . . *blank in MS.*] [755]
soth is þe condicioun of þrldom and þe firste
cause of þrldom is sinne *Genesis*

[756] ¶ Thus may 3e seen þat þe gilt deserued
þrldom but not nature [757] ¶ wherfore þese lordschipes
schulden nouzt moche glorie in here lordschipes
sith þat by naturel condicioun þay ben nouzt lordes ouer
þalles. but for þrldom com first by þe desert of
synne [758] ¶ And forther-ouer þer as þe lawe sayth
þat temporel goodes of bonde folkes been þe goodes
of her lordschipes: 3e þat is to ¹vnderstonde. þe goodes
of þe emperour to defende in here right. but not
to robbe hem ne to reue hem. [759] and þerfore

seip Seneca. ¶ Thi prudence schulde liue benignely wiþ
þi þrallis [760] þilke þat þay clepe thralles
ben goddes poeple. For humble folk ben cristes frendes
þay ben contubernially wiþ þe lord

[761] ¶ Thenk eek as of such seed as cherles
springen. of such seed springe lordes. as wel may
þe cherl be saued as þe lord. [762] The same deth þat
takith þe cherl [.
. *no gap in the MS.*] as þou woldist
þi lord dide wiþ þe if þou were in his plyt.
[763] Euery sinful man is a cherl as to synne ¶ I rede
þe certes þat þou lord werke in such a wise wiþ
þy cherles þat þay raþer loue þe þan drede þe. [764]
I wot wel þer is degre aboue degre as resoun
is and skil þat men don her deuoir þer as it is dewe.
¶ But certes extorciouns and despit of oure vndirlinges is
dampnable

[765] ¶ And forþermore vnderstonde wel þat
conquerours or tyrauntes maken ful ofte þralles of
hem þat born ben of als royal blood as ben þay þat
hem conqueren. [766] þis name of cherdom was
neuer erst couth til noe sayde þat his sone
chanaan schulde be þral of his breþeren for his synne
[767] ¶ what say we þanne of hem þat pylen and doon
extorciouns to holy chirche ¶ Certis the swerdes þat
men ȝeuen first to a knight whan he is newe dubbyd
signifieth faith and þat he schulde defende holy chirche
[.
. . . *no gap*] [768] and as seith seint austin. Thay ben
þe deueles wolues þat stranglen þe scheep of ihū
crist. and doon wors þan wolues. [769] for soþely
whan þe wulf hap ful his wombe he stintith to
strangle scheep. but soþly þe pilours and þe destroy-
ers of þe goodes of holy chirche ne doon nouȝt so. For þai
stynte neuer to pile. [770] ¶ Now as I haue sayd. sith so
is. þat synne was first cause of þraldom. þanne is it

pus. þat ilke tyme þat al þis world was in synne. þanne was al þis world in þraldom and in subieccioun [771] But certis sith þe tyme of grace com: God ordeyned þat somme folk schulde be more heigh in estaate and in degre and somme folkes more lowe and þat euerich schulde be serued in here estate and in degre [772] ¶ And þerfore in somme contrees þere þay ben thralles whan þay han turned hem to þe faith: þay make here þralles free out of thraldom ¶ And þerfor certis þe lord oweth to his man þat þe man owith to þe lord. [773] ¶ The pope callith himself seruauñt of seruauñts of god ¶ But for as moche as þe staat/ of holy chirche [. *no gap*] to þe commune profit might noughþ haue ben kepte ne pees ¹ne reste in erthe. but if god had ordeyned som man of heiher degre and some men of lower: [774] þerfore was soueraignte ordeyned to kepe and to mayntene and defende her vnderlynges or her subiectis in resoun as ferforth as it lith in her power and not to destroye ne confounde hem [775] ¶ wherfore I say þat þilke lordes þat be like wolues þat deuouren þe possessioun of þe catel of pore folk wrongfully wiþoute mercy or mesure: [776] þay schul receyue by þe same mesure þat þay han mesured to pouer folk þe mercy of ihū crist but if it be amendid [777] ¶ Now comeþ deceipt bitwixe marchaunt and marchaunt. and þou schalt vnderstonde þat marchaundise is in many maneres. þat oon is bodily. and þat oþer is gostly. þat oon is honest and leful. and þat oþer is dishonest & vnleful [778] ¶ Of þilke bodily marchaundise þat is honest and leful is þis. þat þer as god hap ordeyned þat a regne or a cuntre is suffisaunt/ to himself. þanne is it honest/ and leful þat of þe abundaunce of þis contre þe men helpe anoþer cuntre þat is more needy [779] ¶ And þerfore þer moote be marchauntz to bringe fro þat oon cuntre to þat oþer her march-

aundise [780] ¶ That oper marchaundise þat men
 hauntyn with fraude and treccherie and deceipt/ with
 lesynges and fals othis is cursed and dampnable
 [781] ¶ Espirituel marchaundiȝe is proprely symonie
 þat is ententyf desire to beye þing/ espirituel þat is
 þing þat apperteyneth to þe seintuarie of god and to
 þe cure of þe soule [782] þis desir is if so be þat a
 man do his diligence to parforme it. al be it þat his
 desir take noon effect. ȝit is it/ to him a dedly
 synne. and if he be ordrid he is irregular [783] ¶ Certis
 Symonye is cleped of Symon Magus þat wolde han
 bought for temporel catel þe ȝifte þat god had ȝiuen
 by þe holy gost to seint petir and to þapostlis
 [784] ¶ And þerfor vnderstonde þat boþe he þat
 sellith and he þat bieth þinges espiritueles ben
 cleped Symonials be it by catel be it by *procurement*
 or by fleissshly prayere of his frendes eiþer fleshly frendes
 or spirituel frendes [785] ¶ Fleissshly in tuo maneres
 as by kynrede or oper frendes ¶ Sothely if þay pray
 for him. it is not worth [. *no gap*] if he
 take þe benefice it is Symonie. and if he be worthy & able.
 it is non [786] ¶ That oper is whan man or
 womman prayen for folk to auance hem oonly for
 wikkid fleissshly affeccoun þat þay haue vnto þe persone
 and þat is ful Symonye. [787] but certis in *seruice*
 [.
 *no gap*]
 moot he be honest and ellis not. and eek þat it be
 withoute bargaynyng and þat þe persone be able
 [788] ¶ For as saith seint Damase ¶ Alle þe synnes of þis
 world at þe reward of þis synne is a þing of nought.
 For it is þe gretteste synne þat may be after þe synne
 of lucifer and antecrist [789] ¶ For by þis synne god
 forlesith þe chirche and þe soule þat he bouȝt wip
 his precious blood by hem þat ȝeuen churches to hem
 þat ben not digne [790] ¶ For þay putten in þeues þat

stelen þe soules of ihū crist and destroyeden patri-
 moygne. [791] by suche vndigne prestis and curates.
 han lewed men þe lasse reuerence of þe sacrament/ of
 holy chirche and suche zeueres of chirches putten out
 þe children of crist. and putten in to þe chirche þe
 deueles oughne sone. [792] þay sellen soules
 þat lambes schulde kepe to þe wolfe þat strangliþ
 hem. And þerfore schul þay neuer haue part
 of þe pasture of lambes þat is þe blisse of
 heuen [793] ¶ Now comeþ hasardrie wiþ his appur-
 tenaunce. as tables. and rafles. of whiche comeþ decept.
 fals othis. chidynges and alle raueynes. blasphemyng.
 and reneying of god and hate of his neighebers. wast
 of goodes out of tyme. and som tyme man-
 slaughter. [794] ¶ Certes hasardours ne mowe not be
 wiþoute gret synne whil þay haunte þat craft [795]
 ¶ Of auarice comeþ eek lesynges. þeste and fals witnesse and
 falsopes ¶ And 3e schul vndirstonde þat þese ben gretesynnes
 and expresse agains þe comaundementz of god as I haue
 sayd [796] ¶ Fals witnesse is in word and eek in dede.
 In word: as for to bireue þin neighebor his good name
 by þy witnessinge. or bireue him his catel or his
 heritage by þy fals witnesse. whan þou for Ire or
 for meede. or for envie berest witnes or accusist
 him or excusist him by þy fals witnes. or ellis ex-
 cusist þiself falsly. [797] ware 3ow questemongers and
 notaries ¶ Certis for fals witnessynge was Susanna in ful
 gret sorwe and payne and many anoþer mo [798] ¶ The
 synne of thefte is eek expresse agayns goddes hestis & þat
 in tuo maners corporel and spirituel. [799] Corporel:
 as for to take þy neigheboours catel agayns his wille.
 be it by force or by sleight. be it by mette. or by mesure.
 [800] by stelynge eeke of fals enditements vpon him and
 in borwyng of þin neghebores catelle in entent neuer
 to paye/ and in semblable þinges. [801] Es-
 spirituel þeste. is sacrilege þat is to sayn hurt-

ynge of^t holy þinges . or of^t þing^t sacred of^t crist^t ¶ Sacrilege is in tuo¹ maneres þat^t oon is by resoun of^t holy place as chirches or chirchewes . [802] For whiche euery vileins synne þat^t men doon in suche places may be clepid sacrilege or euery violence in semblable place ¶ þat^t oþer maner is . as þo þat wiþdrawen falsly þe rightes þat^t longen to holy chirche [803] ¶ [. . . no gap] and generally sacrilege is to reue holy þing^t fro holy place . and vnholý þing^t out of^t holy place . or holy thing^t out of^t holy place

[No break in the MS.]

¶ Remedium contra Auariciam [from margin]

[804]

NOw schul 3e vnderstonde þat^t þe releuyng of auarice is misericorde and pite largely taken. And men might axen why þat^t misericord and pite is relieuyng^t of^t auarice. [805] ¶ Certes þe auaricious man schewith no pite ne misericorde to þe needeful man. For he delitith him in kepyng^t of^t his tresor and nouȝt^t in þe rescowyng^t ne relieuyng^t of^t his euen-cristen. & þerfore speke I first^t of^t misericord [806] ¶ Thanne is misericord as saith þe philosopher a vertu. by which þe corrage of^t a man is stired by þe myseise of^t him þat^t is myseysed. [807] vpon which misericorde folwith in parformyng of^t chariteable werkis of^t misericord. [808] ¶ And certes þese moeuen men to þe misericord of^t ihū crist^t þat^t 3af^t himself^t for oure gult^t. and suffred deþ for misericord and for3af^t vs oure original synne [809] and þer by relessid vs fro peyne of^t helle and amenusid þe peynes of^t purgatorie by penitence and 3eueþ grace wel to do and at þe laste þe ioye of^t heuen [810] ¶ The spices of^t misericorde ben for to loue and for to 3iue . and eek^t for to forȝiue and for to relese and for to haue pite in herte and compassioun of^t þe meschief^t of^t his

euencristen and eek^t chastize þe as neede is
 [811] ¶ Anoper maner of^t remedye agayns auarice is
 resonable largesse but^t sothely here bihouith þe con-
 sideracioun of^t þe grace of^t ihū crist^t and of^t his
 temporel goodes and eek^t of^t his goodes perdurable
 þat^t crist ȝaf^t vs. [812] and eek^t to haue remembrance of^t
 þe deþ þat/ he schal resceyue he noot not^t whanne
 [. . . *no gap*] and eke he schal forgon al þat he hath
 saue oonly þat he haþ dispendid in goode werkes

[813] ¶ But^t for als moche as some folk^t ben vnreson-
 able men oughthe to eschiewe foly largesse þam
 clepen wast/ [814] Certes he þat^t is fool-large ne
 ȝiueþ nouȝt^t his catel. [. *no gap*] Sothely
 what^t þing^t þat^t he ȝiueþ for vayn glorie as to
 mynstrals and to folk^t for to bere his renoun in þe
 world^t he haþ synne and noon almes
 [815] ¶ Certes he lesith foule his goodes þat^t sekith
 wiþ þe ȝift^t ¹of^t his good no þing^t but^t synne.
 [816] he is like to an hors þat^t sekith raper to drynke
 drouy watir and trouble þan for to drinke watir of^t þe
 welle þat^t is cleer. [817] And for as moche as þay ȝiue þer
 as þay schuld not^t ȝiue^t to hem appendith pilke
 malisoun þat^t crist^t schal ȝiue at^t þe day of^t doom to
 hem þat^t schal be dampned.

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ De Gula [*from margin*]

[818]
After auarice comeþ Gloteny which is expresse eke
 agayns þe comaundement of^t god. Gloteny is
 vnresonable and desordeyned coueytise to ete and
 to drynke. [.
 *no gap*] [819] þis synne cor-
 ruptid al þis world as is wel schewed in þe synne of^t
 adam. and of^t Eua ¶ loke eek^t what^t saith seint poul of^t
 glotouns [820] ¶ Many saith seint/ poul gon of whiche

I haue ofte said to þow and now I say it' wepyng'
¶ That' thenemyes of' þe cros of' crist' of
whiche þende is deth and of' whiche here wombe is
here god and here glorie in confusioun þat' so
saueren erpely þinges [821] ¶ he þat' is vsant' [. .

.
.
. *no gap in the MS.* [822] to þis

synne hath many spices ¶ The firste is dronkenes
þat' is thorrible sepulture of' mannes resoun. And
whan man is dronken he hath lost/ his resoun and
þis is dedly synne [823] ¶ But' schortly whan þat' a
man is not' wont' to strong' drinke and *par* auenture ne
knowiþ not' þe strengþe of' þe drynk' or hath feblesse
in his heed or haþ trauayled þurgh whiche he drynkith
þe more and be sodeynly caught' wiþ drynke it is no
dedly synne but' venial [824] ¶ The secounde spice of'
dedly synne is. whan þe spirit' of' a man wexith al trouble
for drunkenesse. and bireueþ him his witte and his discre-
sioun [825] ¶ The þridde spice of' glotouns is whan a man
deuoureth his mete and haþ no rightful maner of' etyng'
[826] ¶ þe ferþe is whan þurgh þe grete abund-
aunce of' his mete þe humours of' his body been dis-
temprid [827] ¶ þe fifte is þe Idilnes by to moche
drinking'. For which a man som tyme forgetith by þe
morwe what' he dide at' eue or on þe night' before

[828] In oþer maner ben distinct þe spices of'
glotonye after seint Gregory ¶ The firste is for to ete or drynke
byfore tyme to ete ¶ The secound is. whan man ȝiueth him
to delicate mete or drinke [829] ¶ The þridde is. whanne
man takith to moche *þerof* ouer mesure ¶ The ferthe is
curiosite *with* gret' entent' to make and apparayle
his mete ¶ The fifte is. For to ete to gredely [830] ¶ These
ben þe fyue fynGRES of' þe deueles hand. by whiche
he drawith folk' to synne. /

[831]

¹ **A** Gayns Glotonye is þe remedie abstinence as
 saip Galien. But þat holde I nouȝt meritorie. If
 he do it oonly for þe hele of his body ¶ Seint
 austyn wol þat abstinence be don for vertu and
 wiþ pacience. [832] Abstinence he saith is litil worth
 but if a man haue good wille þerto and but it be enforced
 by pacience. and by charite. and þat men doon it for
 goddes sake and in hope to haue þe blisse of heuen

[833] ¶ The felawes of abstinence ben attemper-
 aunce þat holdith þe mene in alle þinges. eek
 schame þat eschiewith al dishoneste. Suffisaunce þat
 seeketh noone riche metes ne drynkes ne doþ no force of to
 outrageous apparaillyng of mete [834] ¶ Mesure also
 þat restreyneþ by resoun the dislaue appetit of etyng.
 Sobernes also restreyneþ [.]
 [835] þe delicat wille to ete and þe lasse leysir
 [.]
 no gap in the MS.]

[No break in the MS.]

¶ De luxuria

[836]

After Glotonye þanne cometh leccherie. For þese
 two synnes ben so neih cosyns þat ofte tyme þay
 wol not departe. [837] Vnde paulus ad Ephesios ¶ Nolite
 inebriari vino &c. God wot þis synne is ful displesaunt
 þing to god. vino in quo est luxuria. For he sayde him-
 self. Do no leccherie. and þerfore he putte gret peyne
 agayn þis synne / in þe olde lawe. [838] If a wom-
 man þral were take in þis synne. sche scholde be
 beten with stoones to þe deth. and if sche were a gentil
 womman: sche schulde be slayn wiþ stoones. / and if sche
 were a bisschoppis douȝter: sche schulde be brent by
 goddis comaundement. [839] ¶ Forther ouer by þe
 synne of leccherie: god dreinte al þe world at þe

diluee ¶ And after þat he dreynte fyue citees with thonder
layt and sonk hem in to helle

[840] ¶ Now let vs thanne speke of pilke stynkyng
synne of leccherie þat men clepen aduoutry of weddid
folk þat is to sayn if þat oon of hem be weddid
or elles boþe [841] ¶ Seint Iohan saith þat aduoutris
schuln be in helle in watir brennyng of fuyr and
of brimston. In fuyr for þe leccherie. In brimston For þe
stynk or her ordure. [842] ¶ Certis þe brekyng of
þis sacrament is an horrible þing. hit was makid of
god himself in paradis Confermed of ihū crist as
witnesseth seint Mathew ¶ A man schal lete
fader and mooder and take him to his wif and þay
schul ben two in oon fleisch [843] ¶ This sacrament bitok-
eneþ þe knyttyng togider of crist and of holy chirche
[844] nat oonly þat god forbad aduotrie in dede:
but eek he comaunded þat þou scholdest¹ not coueyte þy
neyhebors wif [845] ¶ In þis heste seiþ seint
austyn is forboden al maner coueytise to do
leccherie ¶ lo what seiþ seint mathew in þe gospel. that
who-so seth a womman to coueytise of his lust: he haþ
doon lechery wiþ hir in his herte. [846] ¶ here may ȝe
se þat nouȝt oonly þe dede of þis synne is forboden:
but eek þe desir to do þat synne [847] ¶ This cursed
synne annoyeth greuosly hem þat it haunten and first
to here soule. for he obligith it to synne and to pyne of
þe deþ þat is pardurable [848] ¶ vnto þe body annoyep
it greuously. also for it dreyep him and wastith him &
schent him. and of his blood he makith sacrifice to þe
deuel of helle ¶ It wastith eek his catel and his substaunce.
[849] and certes if þat it be a foul þing a man to waste
his catel on wommen: ȝit is it a fouler þing whan þat
for such ordure wommen dispende vpon men here catel
and here substaunce [850] ¶ This synne as saith þe prophete
byreueth man and womman her good fame and al here
honour. and it is ful pleasaunt to þe deuel. For þer by

[¹ leaf 277, back]

wynneth he þe moste pray of þis world
[851] ¶ And right as a marchaunt deliteþ him most
in chaffare þat he haþ most auantage of: Right
so delitith þe feend in þis ordure

[852] ¶ This is þe oper hond of þe deuel with fyue
fyngres to cacche þe poeple to his vilonye [853] ¶ þe
firste fynger is þe foule lokyng of þe foule womman
and of þe foule man þat sleth right as a basiliskoc
slep folk by þe venym of his sight. For þe coueytise
of eyen folwiþ þe coueytise of þe herte [854] ¶ The
secunde fynger is the vileynes touchinge in wikkid
manere. and þerfore saith salamon þat who-so
touchith and handelith a womman: he farith lik him
þat handelith þe scorioun þat styngith and sodeinly
sleeth þurgh his enuenemyng as who so touchith
warm picche. it schent his fyngres [855] ¶ The þridde is
foule wordes þat farith lik fuyr þat right anoon
brenneþ þe herte [856] ¶ The ferþe is þe
kissyng. and trewely he were a greet fool þat wolde
kisse þe mouth of a brennyng ouen or of a forneys:
[857] and more fooles ben þay þat kyssen in vilonye.
For þat mouth is þe moup of helle. and namely pise
olde dotard fooles holours. 3it wol þay kisse þough
þay may nought do & smater hem. [858] ¶ Certis þay
ben like to houndes. For an hound whan he comeþ to
a roser or by oper beautes. þough he may nouȝt
¹pisse: 3et wil he heue vp his leg and make a coun-
tenaunce to pisse. [859] and for þat many man weneth
he may not synne for licorousnes þat he doth
with his wif: Certis þat oppinioun is fals. God wot a
man may sle himself wiþ his owne knyft and mak
himself dronke of his oughne tonne [860] ¶ Certis
be it/ wif or child or eny worldly þing þat he
louyth biforn god it is his maumet and he is an ydolastre /.
[861] man schulde loue his wyf by discrecioun
patiently and attemperelly. and þanne is sche as it

were his suster [862] ¶ The fyfte fynger of the deueles
 hond is þe styngynge dede of leccherie [863] ¶ Certes þe fyue
 fynGRES of glotonye þe deuel put in þe wombe of a man.
 & his fyue fynGRES of lecchery bygripeth hym by
 þe reynes for to þrowe him in to þe fourneys of
 helle. [864] þere as þey schuln haue þe fuyr. and þe wormes
 þat euer schal lasten. and wepyng and wayling
 scharp hunger and þurst. and grislines of deueles
 þat schul alto-tere hem wipoute respit/ and wip-
 ouden ende [865] ¶ Of leccherie as I sayde souden
 diuers spices of fornicacion þat is bitwen man
 and womman þat ben nouȝt married and þis is dedly
 synne and against nature [866] al þat is enemy and
 destruccioun to nature. [867] par fay þe
 resoun of a man telliþ him wel þat it is dedly
 synne For als moche as god forbad leccherie and seint
 poule ȝeuiþ hem þat regne þat is due to no wight
 but hem þat doon synne dedly [868] Anoþer synne
 of lecchery is for to bireue a mayden of hir maydenhede /
 for he þat so doþ: Certes he casteth maydenhede out
 of the heighest degre þat is in þe present lif [869] and
 bireuith hir þilke precious fruyt þat þe book clepith þe
 hundrid fruyt. I can ȝeue it noon oþer name in englich.
 but in latyn it is I-cleped *Centesimus fructus secundum*
Ieronimum contra Iouinianum [870] ¶ Certes he þat so
 doth is cause of many harmes and vilenyes mo þan eny man
 can rekene. Right as he som tyme is cause of alle þe damages
 þat bestis doon in þe feeld þat brekith þe hegge or þe closure
 þurgh which he destroyeþ þat may not be restored:
 [871] for certes no more may maydenhode be re-
 stored þan an arm þat is smyten fro þe body
 retourne agayn to waxe. [872] sche may haue mercy þis
 wot I wel if sche do penitence but neuer schal it
 be þat sche nas corrupt [873] ¶ And al be it so þat I
 haue spoke som what of aduoutre: ȝit is it good to speke of
 mo¹ perils þat longen to aduoutre for to eschiewe þat foule

synne [874] ¶ Aduoutrie in latyn is for to sayn approaching
of oþer mannes bed þorugh þe which þat whilom
were oon fleisch abounden here bodyes to oþer persones
[875] ¶ Of þis synne as saip þe wise man
many harmes cometh þer-of ¶ First brekyng of faith ¶ And
certes faith is þe keye of cristendom. [876] and whan þat
faith is broke & lorn: soþely cristendom stont
veyn and wipouten fruyt [877] ¶ This synne is eek a
þeef. For þeste is generally to speke to reue a wight his þing
agayns his wille [878] ¶ Certis þis is þe foulest thefte
þat may be whan a womman stelith hir body from
hire housbounde and ȝueth it to hire holour to defoule
hire & stelith hir soule fro crist/ and ȝueth it to
þe deuel [879] ¶ This is a fouler þeste þan for to breke a
chirche and stele chalises. For þese aduouteres
breke þe temple of god spirituelly and stelen þe vessel
of grace þat is þe body and þe soule ¶ For Ihū crist
schal destroyen hem as saith seint poule [880] ¶ Sothely
þis þeste doutyd gretly Ioseph whan þat his lordes
wyf prayde him of vilonye whan he saide. lo my lady
how my lord haþ take to me vnder my warde al þat he
haþ in þis world. ne no þing of his power is oute of
my power but oonly ȝe þat ben his wyf. [881] and
how schuld I do þanne þis wikkidnes and synne so
horribly agayns god and my lord. God it forbede
¶ Alas al to litel is suche troupe now I-founde [882] ¶ The
þridde harm is þe filthe þurgh which þay breken
þe comaundement of god and defoule þe auctour of
here matrimonye þat is crist. [883] For certis in so moche
as þe sacrament of mariage is so noble and so digne: So
moche is it þe gretter synne for to breke it. for god
makid mariage in paradis in þestat of Innocence to
multiplie man kynde to þe seruice of god [884] and
þerfore is þe brekyng þe more greuous. Of which
breking comen fals heires ofte tymes þat wrongfully
occupien mennes heritage. and þerfore wolde crist putte

hem out of þe regne of heuen þat is heritage to gōode folk. [885] Of þis breking comeþ ek ofte tyme þat folk vnwar wedden or synnen wiþ her kynrede and namely þese harlottis þat haunten bordels of þese foule wommen þat mowe be likened to a comune gonge where as men purgen here entrayles of her ordure [886] ¶ what say we ek of putours þat lyuen by þe horrible synne of putrie & constreyne wymmen 3e som tyme his oughne wyf or his child as don¹ þese baudes to 3elde hem a certeyn rente of here bodily putrie ¶ Certes þese ben cursede synnes [887] ¶ Vnderstonde eek that avoutrie is set gladly in þe ten comaundements bituixe man-slaȝter and thefte. For it is grettest thefte þat may be. for it is thefte of body and soule / [888] and it is lik homicidie For it kerueth a-tuo hem þat first were makid oon fleisch. and þerfore by þe olde lawe of god þay scholde be slayn [889] ¶ But napeles by þe lawe of Ihū crist þat is lawe of pite whan he sayde to þe womman þat was founde in adouotri and schulde haue ben slayn *with* stoones aftir þe wille of þe Iewes as was her lawe. Go quod ihū crist and haue no more wille to synne. or wilne no more to do synne. [890] ¶ Sothely þe vengeance of avouterye is awardid to [. *no gap*] helle / but it be destourbed by penitence [891] ¶ 3it ben þer mo spices of þis cursed synne. as whan þat oon of hem is religious or ellis bothe or for folk þat ben entred in to ordre as subdekin or dekin or prest or hospitalers and euer þe higher þat he be. þe gretter is þe synne. [892] þe þinges þat gretly aggreggith her synne is þe brekyng of here avow of chastite whan þay resceyued ordre. [893] and forþer ouer is soþ þat holy ordre is cheft of alle þe tresor of god and his especial signe and mark of chastite to schewe þat þay ben ioyned to chastite which þat is þe moste precious lif þat is [894] ¶ And eek þese ordred folk ben specially tytled to god and of þe

[¹ leaf 272]

special meyne of god of whiche whan þay don dedly synne þay ben þe special traytours of god and of his poeple. [. *no gap in the MS.*] and whil þay ben suche traytours: here prayer auayleþ not to þe poeple [895] ¶ Prestis ben aungels as by þe dignite of here misterie ¶ But forsoþe seint poul saith þat Sathanas transformeth him in aungel of light. [896] Sopely þe prest þat hauntith dedly synne: he may be likened to þe aungel of light. [. *no gap*] & he semeth aungel of light: but for soþe he is aungil of derknes [897] whiche ben þe sones of belie as schewith in þe book of kinges þat þay were þe sones of belial þat is þe deuel. [898] belial is to say wipoute Iuge and so faren þay þay þynke hem fre and han no Iuge no more þan hath a fre bole þat takith which cow þat him likeþ in þe toun [899] so faren þay by wommen For right as a fre bole is y-nough for al a toun: / Right so is a wikked prest corrupcioun ynough for al a parisch or for al a contray [900] ¶ These prestes as saith þe book ne conne not þe mistery of presthode. þe poeple ne ¹god ne knowe þay not. þay holde hem nought apayed as saith þe book of soden fleissch þat was to hem offred: but þay tooke by force þe fleissch þat is raw: [901] Certes so þese schrewes holde hem not appayed with rosted fleissch and sode fleissch wip whiche þe poeple feeden hem in gret reuerence. But þay wil haue raw fleisch of folkes wyues and here douȝtres [902] ¶ And certes þese wommen þat consenten to here harlotrie don gret wrong to crist and to holy chirche and alle halwes / and to alle soules for þay bireuen alle þese hem þat schulde worschipe crist and holy chirche and praye for cristen soules [903] ¶ And þerfore han suche prestis & here femmans eke þat consenten to here leccherie þe malisoun of al þe court cristian til þay come to amendement

[904] ¶ The þridde spice of aduoutry is som tyme bitwix a man and his wif and þat is whan þay take noon reward in her assembling but only to þe fleischly delit as saith seint Ierom. [905] and ne rekke of no þing but þat þay be assembled by cause þat þay ben maried. al is good ynough as þinkith hem. [906] But in suche folk hap þe deuel power as saith þe aungel Raphael to Thoby in here assemblyng þay 'putten ihū crist out of her herte. and ȝiuen hemself to alle ordure [907] ¶ The ferthe spice is þe assemble of hem þat ben of here kynrede or of hem þat ben of oon affinite or elles wip hem wip whiche here fadres or here kynrede han delitid in þe synne of lecherie. þis synne makith hem like houndes þat taken noon heede of kynrede [908] and certes parenteal is in tuo maneres eyþer gostly or fleishly. gostly as for to dele wip her gossib. [909] For riȝt / so as he þat engendrith a child is his fleishly fader: Riȝt so is his godfader his fader espirituel. for which a womman may in no lasse synne assemble wip hir gossib þan wip hire oughne fleischly fader or broþer [910] ¶ The fifte spice of þilke abhominable synne of which þat no man unneþe oughte to speke ne write. napeles it is openly rehersed in holy wryt/. [911] [. no gap in the MS.] but þough þat holy writ speke of horrible synne: Certes holy writ may not be defouled no more þan þe sonne þat schyneth on a dongehul [912] ¶ Anoper synne appertenith to lechery þat comeþ in sleping. & þis synne comeþ ofte to hem þat ben maydenes and eek to hem þat ben corrupte and þis synne men clepen pollucioun þat cometh in .iiij. maners [913] ¶ Som tyme of languisschyng of body for þe humours ben to ranke and to abundaunt in þe body of man. somtyme of infirmite for þe feblennesse of þe vertu retentyf as þhisik makeþ mencioum. And som tyme for surfete of mete and drynke. [914] som tyme of

vileins þoughtes þat^t ben enclosed in mannes mynde
 whan he [.
 *no gap in the MS.*] kepe him wisely or elles
 may men synne greuously

[*No break in the MS.*]

[915] ¶ Now cometh þe remedye aȝens lechchery and þat^t
 is generally chastite of^t wikkedhede and continence þat^t re-
 streyneþ alle þe desordeigne moeuyngeþ þat^t comen
 of^t fleischly talentes. [916] and euer þe gretter meryt^t
 schal he han þat^t most restreyneth eschau-
 fynges of^t ordure of^t þis synne. and þis is in þre
 maneres. þat^t is to sayn chastite of^t mariage / chastite
 of^t wikkedhede [917] ¶ Now schalt^t þou vnderstonde þat^t
 matrimoigne is leful assemblynge of^t man and
 womman þat^t resceyuen by vertu of^t þe sacrament^t þe
 bond þurgh which þay may not be departid in al here
 lif^t þat^t is to say whil þay lyuen boþe.
 [918] þis as saith þe boke is a ful gret^t sacrament^t
 God makid it / as I haue said in paradis and wolde him-
 self be born in mariage [919] and for to holden mariage.
 he was at^t þe weddyng^t wher as he turnede watir in to
 wyn which was þe firste miracle þat^t he wrought in
 erþe biforn his disciples [920] trewe effect^t of^t
 mariage clensith fornicacioun and replenischith holy
 chirche of^t good lynage. for þat^t is þe ende of^t mariage
 and it chaungith dedly synne in to venyal bituixe
 hem þat^t ben weddid [.
 *no gap in the MS.*] as wel as þe bodyes
 [921] ¶ þis is verray mariage þat^t was first^t blessed by
 god er þat^t þe synne bigan whan naturel lawe was in his
 first^t poynt in paradis. and it was ordeyned þat^t / oo man
 schulde haue but^t oon womman. and oon womman but^t oon
 man as saith seint^t augustyn by many resouns

[922] ¶ First^t for mariage is figured bitwixe crist^t and

holy chirche ¶ Anoþer is for a man is heed of
 a womman algate by ordinaunce it/ schulde be so
 [923] ¶ For if a womman had mo men þan oon: þanne
 schulde sche haue mo hedes þan oon & þat were an
 horrible þing^t biforn god. And eek^t a womman:
 myȝte nouȝt^t please to many folk^t al at oones. and also
 þer ne schulde neuer be pees & rest^t among^t hem. For
 euerich wolde aske his oughne þing^t. [924] and
 forþer-ouer no man schulde knowe his oughne en-
 gendrure ne who schulde haue his heritage and þe
 womman scholde be þe lasse loued fro þe tyme þat
 sche were ioyned to many men

[925] ¶ Now cometh how þat a man schulde bere him
 wiþ his wif and namely in tuo þinges þat is ¹to
 sayn in sufferaunce and in reuerence and þat schewed crist^t
 whan he made first^t womman. [926] For he ne made hire
 not^t of þe heed of adam. for sche schulde not^t to
 gret^t lordschipe haue / [927] þer as þe womman hap þe
 maistry sche makith to moche disaray. þer nedith noon
 ensample of þis. þe experience of þis of day by day
 oughte suffice [928] ¶ Also certes god ne made nouȝt^t
 womman of þe foot^t of adam. For sche ne scholde nouȝt^t be
 holden to lowe for sche can not/ paciently suffre ¶ But god
 made womman of þe ribbe of adam For womman schulde
 be felawe vnto man [929] Man schulde bere him to his
 wif. in faith in troupe and in loue as saip seint
 poule. aman schulde loue his wif as crist^t loued
 holy chirche [. *no gap*] þat deyed for it.
 so schulde a man for his wyf if/ it were neede

[930] ¶ Now how þat a womman schulde be subiect
 to hir housbonde þat tellith seint peter. iiij°. c°. first in obedi-
 ence [931] and eek/ as saip þe decre. A womman þat
 is a wif as longe as sche is a wif sche hap noon
 auctorite to swere ne to bere witnesse wiþoute leue of
 hir housbonde þat is hir lord. algate he schulde be so
 by resoun. [932] sche schulde eek^t serue him in al

honeste and ben attempre of hir array / I wot wel
 þat þay schulde sette here entent to please her house-
 bondes but nough^t by here queyntise of array [933] ¶ Seint
 Ierom saith þat wyues þat ben arrayed in silk and
 in purple ne mowe nouzt cloþe hem in ihū
 crist ¶ I loke what saith saint Iohn eek in þe same matier
 [934] ¶ Seint gregori saith eek þat no wight sekith
 precious cloþing^t ne array but oonly for veyn glorie to ben
 honoured þe more biforn þe poeple [935] ¶ It is a gret
 foly a womman to haue fair array outward and
 hirsilf to ben foul inward [936] ¶ A wyf schulde eek be
 mesurable in lokyng^t and in beryng^t and in laughēing^t
 and discrete in alle hir wordes. [937] and
 aboue alle worldly þinges sche schulde loue hir housebonde/
 with al hire herte and to him to be trewe of hir body.
 [938] so scholde an housebonde eke ben to his wif.
 For sith þat al þe body is þe housebondes. so schulde
 here herte ben. or ellis þer is bitwixe hem tuo as in
 þat no parfyt^t mariage [939] ¶ Thanne schal men vnder-
 stonde: þat for þre þinges a man and his wyf mowe fleischly
 assemble ¶ The firste is in entent/ of engen-
 drure of children to the seruice of god. for certis þat is
 þe causefynal of matrimoyne [940] ¶ The secounde cause is to
 zelden euerych of hem his dette vn¹to oþer of his body
 ¶ For euerych of hem haþ power of his oughne body
 ¶ The þridde is for to eschiewe leccherie and vilenye.
 þe ferþe forsoþe is dedly synne. [941] as to þe
 firste it/ is meritory. The secounde also for as saip þe
 decre þat sche haþ merit of chastite þat zeldith to
 hir housebonde þe dette of hir body. 3e þough it/ be
 agayn hir likyng^t and þe lust of hir hert [942] ¶ The
 þridde maner is venial synne. and trewly scarsly may
 eny of þese be wipoute venial synne for þe
 corrupcioun and for þe delit. [943] The ferþe
 maner is for to vnderstonde as if þay assemble oonly for
 amorous loue and for noon of þe forsayde causes. but

for to accomplise pilke brennyngē delyt^t þay rekke neuer how ofte. soþely it is dedly synne and ȝit^t wiþ sorwe some folk^t wole more peyne hem for to doon þan to her appetit suffiseþ.

[944] the secounde maner of chastite is to ben a clene wydewe and to eschiew þe embrasynges of men and desiren þe embrasynges of ihū crist^t [945] þese ben þo þat^t han ben wyues and han forgon here housbondes and eek^t wommen þat^t han doon lecherie and be relieued by penitence / [946] and certis if^t þat^t a wyf^t couþe kepe hir al chast^t by licence of hir housebonde so þat^t sche ȝeue non occasioun þat^t he agilt^t it were to hir a gret^t merit^t [947] ¶ Thise maner wymmen þat^t obseruen chastite moste be clene in herte as wel as in body and in þought^t and mesurable in cloping^t & in countenaunce. abstinent in etyng^t and drynkyng^t in speche and in dede. and þanne is sche þe vessel or þe boyst^t of the blessed Magdaleyne þat^t fulfillith holy chirche ful of good odour. [948] ¶ The þridde maner of chastite is virginite. and it/ bihouep þat^t sche be holy in herte and clene of body. and þanne is sche spouse of ihū crist^t and sche is þe lif of aungels. [949] sche is þe preysyng^t of þis world. and sche is as þese martires in egalite. sche haþ in hir þat tonge þat^t tonge may nouȝt^t telle. [950] virginite bar oure lord ihū crist^t and virgine was himselue

[951] ¶ Anoper remedy agayns lecherie is specially to wiþdrawe suche þinges as ȝiuen occasioun to pilke vilonye as is ease and etyng^t and drynkyng^t For certes whan þe pot^t boylith strongely. þe beste remedye is to wiþdrawe þe fuyr [952] sleping^t eek^t in gret^t quiete is eek^t a greet^t/ norice vnto lecherie

[953] ¶ Anoper remedy agayns lecherie is þat^t a man or a womman eschiewe þe companye of hem by whiche he doutith to be tempted. for al be it so þat^t þe dede be wiþstonde^t ȝit^t is þer gret^t temptacioun

[954] sothely a whit wal al þough it brenne not fully by stikynge of a candel yet is þe wal blak of stiking of a candel ful ofte tyme. [955] I rede þat no man truste in his oughne perfeccioun but he be strengre þan Sampson or holiere þan Dauyd. and wiser þan salamon

[956] ¶ Now after þat I haue declared 3ow þe seuen dedly synnes as I can & some of here braunches and here remedies: soþely if I couþe I wolde telle 3ow þe ten comaundementes. [957] but so heigh a doctrine I leue to diuines. but/ napeles I hope to god þay ben touchid in þis lital tretys eue¶rich of hem alle

De secunda parte penitencie [in margin]

[958] **N**ow for as moche as þe secounde part of penitence stant in confessioun of mouth as I bigan in þe chapitre I say seint austyn saith. [959] Synne is euery word and euery dede / and al þat men coueyten agayn þe lawe of ihū crist. and þis is for to synne in herte in mouthe and in dede by þy fyue wittis þat been. sight heerynge smellynge tastynge or sauorynge or felynge [960] ¶ Now it is good to vnderstonden þe *circumstaunces* þat aggreggen moche to euery synne. [961] þou schalt considre what þou art þat dost þe synne wheþir þat þou be mal or femal. old oþer 3onge gentil or þral. free or seruauent hool or seek. weddid or sengle. ordrid. or vnordred wys or fool clerk or seculer [962] if sche of þy kyn bodily or gostly or noon. if eny of þy kynrede haue synned wiþ hire or noon and many mo þinges

[963] ¶ That oþer *circumstaunce* is wheþer it be don in fornicacioun or in aduoutry or incest or noon or mayden or noon in maner of homicide or non horrible grete synnes or smale and how longe þou hast continued in synne [964] ¶ The þridde *circumstaunce* is þe place wher þou hast don synne wheþer in oþer

mennes houses or in þin owne in feld or in chirche
or in chirchehawe. in chirche dedicate or noon.
[965] For if [.]

no gap in the MS.] it be dedicate it^t is enterdited til it^t
be reconsiled by þe bischop [966] and þe
prest^t scholde be enterdyted þat^t dede such a vilonye to terme
of al his lyf & scholde no more synge no masse and if^t he dede
he schulde do dedly synne at^t euery tyme þat^t he song^t masse
[967] ¶ The ferthe circumstaunce is by which media-
tours as by which messagers ¹or for entysement^t or for
consentement^t to bere companye with felawes For
many a wrecche for to bere companye wol go to þe
deuel of^t helle. [968] for þay þat^t eggyn or con-
sentyng to þe synne ben parteneres of^t þe synne and
of^t þe dampnacioun of^t þe synnere

[969] ¶ The fyfte is how many tymes
þat^t he haþ synned if^t it^t be in his mynde / and how ofte
þat^t he haþ falle. [970] For he þat^t ofte fallith in synne.
despiseþ þe mercy of^t god and encresceth his synne
and is vnkynde to crist^t and he waxith þe more feble
to wipstonde synne and synneþ þe more lightly
[971] and þe latter arrisith and is þe more eschiewe
to schriue him. and namely to him þat^t haþ ben his con-
fessour. [972] For whiche þat^t folk^t whan þay falle agayn
in here olde folies eyther þay forletin her confessours
al vtterly or ellis þay departen here schrifte in diuers
places. but^t soþely such departed schrifte haþ no
mercy of^t god of^t his synnes [973] ¶ The sixte circum-
staunce is why þat^t a man synneþ as by which temptacioun
[.] *no gap*] or by ex-
cityng^t of^t oþer folk^t or if^t he synne wip a womman by
force or by hir owne assent^t. [974] or if^t þe womman
maugre hir heed haþ ben enforced or noon. þis
schal sche telle. or for coueytise or for pouerte &
if^t it was hire procuryng^t or noon and alle such maner

harneys [975] ¶ The .vij. circumstaunce is in what maner he hap don his synne or how þat sche hap suffred þat folk han doon to hire. [976] þe same schal þe man telle pleynty alle þe circumstaunces. and wheþer he haue synned wip commune bordeal womman or noon. [977] or doon his synne in holy tyme or noon. in fastyng tyme or noon. or biforn his schrifte of after his latter schrifte [978] And hap par aduenture broken his penaunce enioyned þerfore. by whos help or by whos counseil by socery or by oþer craft al moste be told [979] ¶ Alle þese þinges after þay be grete or smale engreggen þe consciens of a man and eek þe prest þat is þe iugge may þe better ben auysed of his iugement in ȝiuyng of þy penaunce / and þat is after þy contricioun. [980] For vnderstonde wel þat after þe tyme þat a man hap defouled his baptisme by synne if he wol come to sauacioun þer is noon oþer wey but penitence and schrifte of mouthe and by satisfaccioun [981] and namely by þo tuo. if þer be a confessour to which he may schryue him. and þe þridde if ȝe haue lif to parforme it.

[982] þanne schal men loke it and considre þat if he wol make a trewe and a profitable confessioun þer moste be foure condiciouns [983] ¶ First it moste ben in sorweful bitterness of herte as sayde þe king Ezechiel to god ¶ I wol remembre me alle þe ȝeres of my lif in bitternes of myn hert. [984] þis condicioun of bitternes hap fyue signes. The first is þat confessioun moste be schamefast not for to couere ne hyde his synne but for he hap agultid his god and defoulid his soule [985] ¶ And herof saith seint augustyn. The herte tremblith for schame of his synne. and for he hath gret schamefastnes. he is digne to haue gret mercy of god. [986] Such was þe confessioun of þe publican þat wolde nouȝt heue vp his eyzen to heuen. For he had offendid god of heuen For which schamefastnes he had anon þe mercy of god [987] ¶ And þere seith

seint^t augustyn þat^t such schamefast^t folk^t ben next^t forzeuenes of^t remissioun [988] ¶ The secounde signe is humilite of^t confessioun ¶ Of which saiþ seint petre humblith ȝow vnder þe might^t of^t god. þe hond of^t god is myȝty in confessioun For þer-by god forȝiueth þe synnes he alone haþ þe power. [989] and þis humilite schal ben in herte and in signe outward. For right^t as he haþ humilite to god in his herte^t right^t so schulde he humble his body outward to þe prest^t þat^t sittith in goddes place [990] For which in no manere sith þat^t crist^t is souerayn and þe prest^t is his mene and mediatour bitwix crist^t and þe synnere and þe synner is þe lasse as by way of^t resoun^t [991] þanne schulde nouȝt^t þe confessour sitte as lowe as þe synnere but^t þe synnere schulde knele biforn him or at^t his feet^t but^t if^t maladye destourbid it^t for he schal take no keep who sittith þere but^t in whos place þat^t he sitteth. [992] a man þat^t haþ trespassed to a lord and cometh for to axe him of^t mercy and to maken his accord / and settith him doun anon by þe lord. men wolde holde him outrageous and not^t worþy so soone for to haue mercy ne remissioun [993] ¶ The þridde signe is þat^t þy schrifte schulde be ful of^t teeris if^t men may wepe. and if^t he may not^t wepe wiþ his bodily eyen let^t him wepe wiþ his herte. [994] Such was þe confessioun of^t seint peter. For after he hadde forsake ihū crist^t. he wente out^t and wepte ful bitterly [995] ¶ The ferthe signe is þat^t he lette nouȝt^t for schame to schewen his confessioun. [996] Such was þe confessioun of^t þe magdaleyn þat^t spared for no schame of^t hem þat^t were at^t þe feste to go to oure lord ¹ihū crist^t and byknowe to him hire synne [997] ¶ The fifte signe is þat^t a man or a womman be obeisaunt/ to resceyue þe penaunce þat^t him is enioyned. For certis ihū crist^t for þe gultes of^t oon man was obedient^t to his deth

[998] ¶ The oþer condicioun of^t verray confessioun is þat^t it^t hastily be doon. For certes if^t a man had a dedly wounde. euer þe lenger þat^t he taried to warisch

himself: þe more wolde it corrupte and haste him to
 his deþ and eek þe wounde wolde be þe worse to
 hele [999] ¶ and right so fareþ synne þat long
 time is in a man vnschewed [1000] Certes a man oughte
 soone schewe his synne for many causes as for drede
 of deth þat comeþ sodeinly and not certeyn what tyme
 it schal come or ben in what place. and eek þe drecchyng
 of oon synne draweþ anoþer [1001] and eek þe lenger
 he tarieþ þe ferþer is he from crist and if he abyde
 vnto his laste day skarsly may he schriue him or re-
 membre him of his synnes or repente for þe
 greuous malady of his deth [1002] ¶ And for as moche as
 he hap not in his lif herkened Ihū crist whan he
 hap spoken: he schal crien to ihū crist at his laste
 day. and scarsly wol he herken him. [1003] And
 vnderstonde þat þis condicioun moste haue foure þinges
 þy schrifte moste ben purueyed byforn and auysed.
 For wikked haste doþ no profyt and þat a man can
 schryue him of his synnes. be it of pride or of enuye and
 so forþ alle þe spices and þe circumstaunces [1004] and þat
 he haue comprehendid in his mynde the nombre and þe
 gretnes of his synne [.
no gap] [1005] and eek þat he be contrit of his sinnes
 and in stedefast purpos by þe grace of god neuer eft to
 falle in synne and eek þat he drede and countrewayte
 himself and þat he flee þe occasiouns of synne to whiche he
 is enclyned [1006] ¶ Also þat þou schalt schriue þe of alle
 þin synnes to oon man. and nat a parcel to oon man and
 a parcel to anoþer man þat is vnderstonde in entent
 to parte þy confessioun as for schame or drede. for it
 nys but strangelyng of þy soule [1007] For certes ihū
 crist is enterely al good. in him is noon imperfeccioun. and
 þerfore ouþer he forþiueþ al parfitely or elles neuer a
 del. [1008] I say nought if þer be assigned to þy
 penitencere for certein synne þat þou art bounde to
 schewe him al þe remenaunt of þy synnes of whiche

pou hast^t ben schryuen of^t þy curate but if^t it^t like þe of^t þin humilite. þis is no departyng^t of^t schrifte [1009] ne I ne say not^t þere as I speke of^t diuisioun of^t confessioun ¹þat^t if^t pou haue licence to schryue þe to a discret^t and to an honest^t prest^t wher þe likith and eek^t by þe licence of^t þy curate þat^t pou ne maist^t wel schriue þe to him of^t alle þyn synnes. [1010] but^t let^t no synne be byhinde vntold as fer as pou hast remembrance. [1011] and whan pou schalt^t þe schriue to þi curate^t telle him eeke al þy synne þat^t pou hast^t doo sith pou were last^t I-schryue. þis is no wikkid entent^t of^t diuisioun of^t schrifte

[1012] ¶ Also þy verrey schrifte askith certeyn condiciouns. First þat^t pou schriue þe by þy fre wille nouȝt^t constreynd ne for schame of^t folk^t ne for maladye or such þing^t. for is resoun þat^t he þat^t trespassith wiþ his fre wille [. . . *no gap in the MS.*] confesse his trespas. [1013] noon oþer man schal telle his synne but himself^t. ne he schal not^t nayte or denye his synne ne wrappe him with þe prest^t for his amonestyng^t to lete synne [1014] ¶ The secounde condicioun is þat^t þy schrifte be laweful þat^t is to sayn þat^t pou þat^t schriuest^t þe and eek^t þe prest^t þat^t herith þy confessioun ben verrayly in þe feith of^t holy chirche [1015] and þat^t a man be nouȝt^t despaired of^t þe mercy of^t Ihū crist/ as caym or Iudas. [1016] and eek^t a man moot^t accuse himself^t of^t his owne trespas and not^t another^t! but^t he schal blame and wite himself^t and his oughne malice of^t his synne / and noon other [1017] ¶ But^t napeless if^t þat^t anoþer man by occasioun or ellis enticer of^t his synne or þat^t þe estate of^t a persone be such þurgh which his synne aggregith or elles þat^t he may not playnly schryue hym but^t he telle þe persone wiþ which he haþ synned þanne may he telle it [1018] so þat^t his entent^t be nouȝt^t to bakbyte þe persone^t! but^t oonly to declare his confessioun

[1019] Thow schalt^t nouȝt^t eke make no lesyng^t in
 þy confessioun for humilite [. . . *no gap*] to sayn
 þat^t þou hast^t don synnes of^t whiche þou were
 neuer gulty [1020] as seint augustyn saiþ ¶ If^t þou by
 cause of^t humilite makest^t lesynges
 on þiself^t. þough þou were not^t in synne biforn
 ȝit^t art^t þou þanne in synne þurgh^t þy lesynges [1021]
 ¶ Thou most^t schewe þy synne by þyn oughne propre
 mouth but^t þou woxe dombe. and not by no
 lettre. for þou þat^t hast^t don þe synne þou schalt^t haue
 þe schame. [1022] þou schalt^t nouȝt^t
 peynte þy confessioun by faire subtil wordes to couer
 þe more þy synne for þanne bigilist^t þou þiself^t and
 not^t þe prest^t. þou most^t telle it^t platly be it
 neuer so foul ne so horrible. [1023] þou schalt^t eek/
 schriuē þe to a prest^t þat^t is discrete to counsaile þe ¶ And
 þou schalt^t nouȝt^t schryue þe for ¹veinneglorie ne for
 ypocrisie. [.
 *no gap in the MS.*] [1024] ¶ þou
 schalt^t not^t eek^t renne to þe prest^t sodeinly to telle him
 lightly þy synne as who-so tellith a tale or a iape. but^t
 auysily and wiþ gret^t deuocioun^t [1025] and generally
 schriuē þe ofte. if^t þou ofte falle^t ofte þou aryse by
 confessioun [1026] ¶ And þough þou schryue þe ofter
 þan oones of^t synne of^t which þou hast^t ben schriuē^t it is
 þe more merite and as saith seint augustyn ¶ Thou
 schalt^t haue þe more lightly relessyng^t and grace of^t god
 bothe of^t synne and of^t payne. [1027] and certes oones a
 ȝer atte atte lest/ way it is laweful to be houselyd. For
 sothely oones a ȝer alle þinges renouelen

[*No break in the MS.*]

[1028] ¶ Now haue I told of^t verray confessioun
 þat^t is the secounde partye of^t penitence

[1029]

¶ De *tercia parte penitencie*

The þridde partye of penitence is Satisfaccioun and
T þat stondith generally in almes dede and
 bodily peyne [1030] ¶ Now ben þer [. . . .]
 of almes dede ¶ Contricioun of herte where a man
 offereþ himself to god ¶ The secounde is. to haue pite of þe
 defaute of his neighebor ¶ The þridde is. in
 good counseil and comfort gostly and bodily where men
 han neede and namely in sustenance of mennes foode.
 [1031] and take keep þat a man haþ neede of [. . .
 *no gap in the MS.*]
 cloþing and herberwe. he haþ [. . . .] charitable
 counseil and visityng in prisoun and malady. and
 sepulture of his dede body [1032] ¶ And if þou may not
 visite þe needeful wiþ þy persone: visite by þy
 message and by þy giftes. [1033] þese ben general
 almesses or werkes of charite of hem þat han temporal
 riches or discrecioun in counselynge. Of þese werkes
 schalt þou hieren at þe day of doom

[1034] þis almes schalt þou doon of þin oughne
 propr þinges and hastily and priuely if þou maist.
 [1035] But napeles if þou maist not do priuely:
 þou schalt nouȝt forbere to do almes þough men se
 it / so þat it be nouȝt don for þank of þe world but
 oonly for þonk of ihū crist [1036] ¶ For as witnessith
 seint Mathewe .v^{to}. ¶ A cite may not ben hid
 þat is set on a mountayn ne non light not a lanterne and
 put it vnder a buisschel but men sette it on a candel
 stikke to lighte þe men in þe hous. [1037] Right
 so schal ȝoure light lighten biforn men þat men may
 se ȝoure goode werkes and glorifien ȝoure fader þat is in
 heuen

[1038] ¶ Now as to speke of bodily peyne. it is in
 prayere in wakinges in fastynges. in vertuous

teehinges of orisouns. [1039] 3e schul vnderstonde þat orisouns or prayeres is for to seyn a pitous wil of herte þat redresseþ in god and expressith it by word outward to remembre harmes and to haue þinges espirituel & ¹durable and som tyme temporel þinges of whiche orisouns of þe orisoun of þe pater noster hap oure lord ihū crist enclosed most þinges [1040] ¶ Certis it is priuiledged of þre þinges in his dignite [. no gap] þan any oþer prayer. For ihū crist himself maketh it. [1041] and it is schort for it schulde be coud þe more lightly. and forto wiþholde it þe more esily in herte and helpe himseþ þe oftere with þe orisoun [1042] and for a man schulde be þe lasse very to say it. and for a man may not excuse him to lerne it. it is so schort and so easy and for it comprehendith in it self alle goode prayeres [1043] ¶ The expositioun of þis holy praier þat is so excellent and so digne. I bitake to þese maystres of theology. saue þus moche wol I sayn whan þou prayest/ þat god schulde forþiue þe þy gultes as þou forþiest hem þat þey gulten to þe: be ful wel war. þat þou be not out of charite. [1044] þis holy orisoun amenisith eek venial synne. and þefore it appendith specially to penitence.

[1045] þis praier moste be trewely sayd and in verray faith. and þat men pray to god ordinatly and discretly & deuoutly and alway a man schulde putte his wille to be subiect/ to þe wille of god [1046] ¶ þis orisoun moste eek be sayd wiþ greet humblesse and ful pure honestly and nouȝt to þe annoyaunce of eny man or womman ¶ It most eek be continued with þe werkis of charite. [1047] hit auaylith agayns þe vices of þe soule / as seiþ seint Ierom ¶ By fastyng ben saued þe vices of þe soule.

[1048] ¶ After þis þou schalt vnderstonde þat bodily peyne stant in wakyng. for ihū crist saith ¶ wakith and prayeth þat 3e ne entre not/ in to

temptacioun. [1049] 3e schul vnderstonde þat fastyng stont in þre þinges ¶ In forbering^t of bodily mete and drink^t. and in forberyng^t of worldly iolite. and in forbering^t of worldly synne. þis is to sayn þat a man schal kepe him fro dedly synne in al þat he may

[1050] ¶ And þou schalt vnderstonde eek^t þat god ordeyned fastyng^t. and to fastyng^t appurteynen foure þinges [1051] ¶ largesce to pouer folk^t. gladnes of hert^t espirituel. not^t to ben angry ne annoyed ne grucche for he fastith. and also resonable hour for to ete. ete by mesure þat is to sayn a man schulde not^t ete in vntyme ne sitte þe lenger at^t his mete for he fastith

[1052] ¶ Thanne schal þou vnderstonde þat bodily peyne stant^t in discipline or teching^t by word or by writyng^t or by ensample. Also in heires weryng^t or of stamyn or of habeious on her naked fleisch for cristes sake and suche maner penaunce [1053] ¶ But^t ware þe wel þat such maner penaunce ¹of þyn fleiss make nouȝt^t þin herte bitter or angry or anoyed of þiself^t. for better is to cast^t away þin hayre þan for to caste away þe swetnes of ihū crist^t. [1054] and þerfor seiþ seint poule ¶ Clothe ȝow as þay þat ben chosen of god in herte of misericorde debonairete. sufferauunce and such maner of cloþing^t. of þe which ihū crist^t is more appayed þan of haire or of hauberkis

[1055] ¶ þan is eek^t in knokkyng^t on þe brest^t. in scourgyng^t wiþ ȝerdes. in knelynges. in tribulaciouns [1056] in suffring^t paciently wronges þat ben doon to him/ and eek^t in pacient^t sufferauunce of maledies or lesyng^t of worldly catel or of wif^t. or of child or of oþir frendes

[1057] ¶ Thanne schalt þou vnderstonde whiche þinges destourben penaunce / and þis is in foure þinges. þat is. drede. schame. hope. and wanhope. þat is desperacioun [1058] ¶ And for to speke first/ of drede for which he

weneth þat he may suffre no penaunce. [1059] þer
 agayns is remedye for to þinke þat bodily penaunce is
 but schort and litel at þe regard of þe peyne of helle þat
 is cruel and so long þat it/ lastith wipouten ende

[1060] ¶ Now agains þe schame þat a man haþ to
 schryue him and namely þese ypocrites þat wolde
 be holde so parfyt þat þay haue no meede to schriue
 hem. [1061] agayns þat schame schulde a man þinke þat
 by way of resoun þat he hath not ben aschamed to
 do foule þinges. Certis him oughte not ben aschamed to
 doon faire þinges & goode þinges and þat is confessioun [1062]
 ¶ And man scholde eek þinke þat god seeth alle þy
 þoughtes and þy werkes to him may no þing be
 hyd ne couered [1063] men schulde eek remembre
 hem of þe schame þat is to come at/ þe day of doom to
 hem þat ben nought penitent and schriuen in þis present
 lif. [1064] For alle þe creatures in heuen ne in erthe and in
 helle schuln seen apertly al þat he hydith in þis world

[1065] ¶ Now for to speke of hem þat
 ben so negligent and slowe to schryue hem stant in
 tuo maneres [1066] ¶ þat oon is. þat he hopith for to lyue
 longe and for to purchace moche riches for his delyt.
 and þanne he wol schriue him. and as he saith he may as
 him semith tymely ynough come to schrifte
 [1067] ¶ Another is of þe Surquidie þat he haþ in cristes
 mercy [1068] ¶ Agains þe firste vice he schal þinke
 þat oure lif is in no sikernes. and eek þat al þe
 riches in þis world ben in aduenture and passen as a
 schadowe on þe wal [1069] and as saith seint Gregory
 þat it apperteyneth to þe grete rightwisnes of god þat
 neuer schal þe ¹peyne stynte of hem þat neuer
 wolde wipdrawe hem fro synne her þankes. but
 ay continue in synne for þilke perpetuel wille to doon
 synne. schul þay haue perpetuel peyne

[1070] ¶ wanhope in tuo maneres is. þe firste wan-
 hope is in þe mercy of crist ¶ That oper is þat þay

pinke þay mighte nought longe perseuer in good-
 nesse [1071] ¶ The firste wanhope cometh of þat he
 demyth þat he synned so highly and so ofte and so
 longe layn in synne þat he schal not be saued
 [1072] ¶ Certis azens þat cursed wanhope schulde he
 þenke þat þe passioun of Ihū crist is more strong for
 to vnbynde þan synne is strong for to bynde
 [1073] ¶ Agains þe secounde wanhope he schal pinke
 þat als ofte as he fallith he may arise agayn by penitence /
 And þough he neuer so longe haue leyn in synne þe
 mercy of crist is alway redy to resceyue him to mercy
 [1074] ¶ Agains þe wanhope þat he demeth þat he pinkith he
 schulde not longe perseuere in goodnesse. he schal pinke
 þat þe febles of þe deuel may no þing doon but
 men wol suffre him. [1075] And eek he schal haue strengþe
 of þe help of god and of al holy chirche and of þe
 proteccioun of aungels if him list

[1076] ¶ Thanne schal men vnderstonde what is þe
 fruyt of penaunce And after þe word of ihū crist ¶ hit is
 þe endeles blisse of heuen [1077] þer ioye hap no
 contrariete of wo ne of penaunce ne greuaunce. þer alle
 harmes ben passed of þis present lif. ther as is þe sikernes
 fro þe payne of helle. [.]

. [1078] . . .

no gap in the MS.] þere as is þe body of man þat whilom
 was seek. frel and feble and is immortal. and
 so strong and so hool þat þer may no þing empeire
 it. [1079] þer nys neyþer hunger þurst ne colde.
 but euery soule replenished wip þe sight and þe parfyt
 knowyng of god [1080] ¶ This blisful regne may men
 purchase by pouerte espirituel and þe glorie by lowe-
 nes. þe plente of ioye by hunger and þurst and
 reste by trauaile and þe lif by deth and mortificacioun of
 synne.

[*Small break in the MS.*]

¶ Preces de Chauceres ./

[1081]

Now pray I to ȝow alle þat heren þis litel tretis
 or reden þat if þer be any þing þat likes
 hem þat þer-of þay þanke oure lord ihū
 crist of whom procedith alle witte and al goodnes
 [1082] ¶ And if þer be eny þing þat displesith hem I
 pray hem þat þay arette it to þe defaute of myn
 vnconnyng¹ and not to my wille þat wolde fayn haue
 sayd better if I hadde connyng¹ [1083] ¶ For þe
 book¹ saip . al þat is writen . for oure
 doctrine is writen [. *no gap*] [1084] For I
 biseke ȝow mekely for þe mercy of god þat ȝe pray for
 me þat god haue mercy on me and forȝeue me my
 giltyes [1085] and nameliche my *translaciouns* and of endit-
 yng/ in worldly vanitees . whiche I reuoke in my re-
 tracciouns [1086] as is þe book¹ of troyles . þe book¹
 also of fame . þe book¹ of .29. ladies þe
 book¹ of þe duchesses . þe book¹ of seint valentines
 day and of þe *parlament* of briddes . þe Tales of Cauntur-
 bury alle þilke þat sounen in to synne [1087] þe book¹ Many
 of þe leo . and oþer bokes if þay were in my mynde / or
 remembraunce and many a song¹ and many a lecherous
 lay . Of þe whiche crist for his grete mercy forȝiue me þe
 synnes [1088] ¶ But of þe *translacioun* of boce de consolacione
 and oþer bokes of *consolacioun* and of legend of lyues of
 seintes and omelies and moralitees and of deuocioun . [1089]
 that þanke I oure lord ihū crist and his moder and alle þe
 seintes in heuen [1090] bisekyng¹ hem þat þay fro
 hennysforth vn-to my lyues ende sende me grace to
 biwayle my giltyes and to studien to þe sauacioun of my
 soule and *graunte* me grace and space of verray repentaunce .

penitence . confessioun . and satisfaccioun . to don in þis
 present^t lif^t [1091] þurgh þe benigne *grace* of^t him þat^t is king^t
 of^t kynges and prest^t of^t alle prestis þat^t bought^t vs
 wip his precious blood of^t his hert^t : [1092] So þat^t I moote
 be oon of^t hem at^t þe day of^t doom that^t schal be sauyd
Qui cum patre .

APPENDIX

TO THE HARLEIAN MS 7334

OF AN END-LINK, HYMN, AND CUTS, NOT IN THE MS.

-
- | | PAGE |
|---|------|
| 1. The genuine <i>Nun's Priest's End-Link</i> , Group B,
§ 15, from MS Reg. 17 D xv, Brit. Mus. ... | 694 |
| ('Twould have followd p. $\frac{399}{577}$ above, had it been
in the Harleian MS.) | |
| 2. The Hymn of Chaucer's Oxford Clerk Nicholas,
"Angelus ad Virginem" (A 3216, p. 92 abuv),
from the Arundel MS 248, ab. 1250-60 A.D.,
in English and Latin ; a facsimile and a print | 695 |
| 3. Woodcuts of the Paintings of the 23 <i>Tellers of
the Canterbury Tales</i> copied from the Ellesmere
MS, and cut, by Mr. W. H. Hooper. | |
| 4. Woodcuts of 6 <i>Tellers of 6 of the Canterbury
Tales</i> — the Reeve, Cook, Wife of Bath,
Pardoner, Monk, and Manciple,—and of 6
<i>Allegorical Figures for the Parson's Tale</i> ,—
Envy and Charity, Gluttony and Abstinence,
Lechery and Chastity,—copied from MS Gg.
4. 27 in the Cambridge University Library,
and cut, by Mr. W. H. Hooper. | |

1.

THE NUN'S PRIEST'S END-LINK.

[*MS Reg. 17 D xv., leaf 284 (paper, ? 1460).*]

[S]ir Nonnes prist'. our host' sayde anon
 I-blessid be thy breche . and euery stoon
S This was a mery tale of chauntilier
 But' be my trowth if' thou were a seculer 4640
 Thou woldest' bien . a tredefoule aright'
 For if' thou have corage . as thou hast' myght'
 The were nede . of' hennys as I wene
 Ya mo than .vij. tymes . seventene 4644
 Se whiche brawnes . hath this gentil prist'
 So grete a nekke . and so large a brist'
 He lokith as a sparhawke . with his Ien
 Hym nedith nat'. his colours for to dyen 4648
 With brasil ne with grayne of portyngale
 Now *sir* faire fal yow . for youre mery tale
 And after that' he . with ful myrry chiere
 Sayde vnto another as ye chul here

Here endith
 the tale of
 pe none
 prest/

[*MS Reg. 17 D xv extract stops*]

["the prolog' of the Maunciple" *follows in*
MS Reg. 17 D xv.]

2.

The Hymn of Chaucer's Oxford Clerk, NICHOLAS,

"ANGELUS AD VIRGINEM."

(Miller's Tale, Group A. l. 3216, p. 92, abuv.)

ENGLISHT (rymes *ababec, dde, cee*).

THE LATIN ORIGINAL:

Arundel MS. 248, leaf 154. Ab. 1250-60, A.D.

'ANGELUS AD VIRGINEM.'

1

Gabriel fram evene king
 sent to þe maide swete,
 broute¹ þire blisful tiding,
 And faire þe gan hire greten : 4
 "Heil be þu, ful of grace arith !
 "for godes sone, þis evene lith, 6
 "²for mannes louen,
 "wile man bicomem,
 "and taken 9
 "fles of þe, maiden brith,
 "ma[n]ken fre for to maken
 "of senne and deules mith." 12

2

Mildeliche im gan andsweren
 þe milde maiden þanne :
 'wiche wise sold ichs beren
 child with-huten manne ?' 16
 þangle seide, "ne dred te nout !
 "þurw þoligast sal ben iwrou 18
 "þis ilche þing,
 "warof tiding
 "ichs bringe : 21
 "al manken wrth ibout
 "þur þi swete chiltinge,
 "and hut of pine ibrou 24

1

Angelus ad uirginem
 subintrans in conclaue,
 Virginis formidinem
 demulcens inquit, "Aue !
 "Aue regina uirginum !
 "celi terreque dominum
 "conciplies,
 "& paries,
 "intacta,
 "salutem hominum,
 "tu, porta celi facta,
 "medela criminum."

2

'Quomodo conciperem,
 'que uirum non cognoui ?
 'qualiter infringerem
 'quod firma mente uoui !'
 "Spiritus sancti gracia
 "perficiet hec omnia.
 "ne timeas,
 "sed gaudeas
 "secura,
 "quod castimonia
 "manebit in te pura,
 "dei potencia."

¹ *e* is an overline insertion. In lines 3, 4, 26, 28, 53, 60, &c. the 'þ' of þe, þire, þie, þerde, &c. stands for 'h'.

² A later overline 'so' is before 'for'; but the line should be only 2 measures.

3

Wan þe maiden understud,
 and þangles wordes þerde,
 mildeliche, with milde mud,
 to þangle þie andswerde :
 ' Hure lordes þenmaiden iwis
 ' ies am, þat her abouen is ;
 ' aneftis me
 ' fulfurthed be
 ' þi save,
 ' þat ies, sithen ¹his wil is,
 ' maiden, with-huten lawe,
 ' of moder haue þe blis.'

4

þangle wente a-wei mid þan,
 al hut of hire sighte ;
 and² þire wombe arise gan,
 þurw þoligastes mithe ;
 in hire was crist biloken anon,
 suth god, soth man, ine fleas and bon ;
 and of hir fleas
 iboren was
 at time,
 war-þurw us kam god won,
 þe bout us hut of pine,
 and let im for us slon.³

5

Maiden moder makeles,
 of milche ful ibunden,
 Bid for hus, im þat þe ches,
 at wam þu grace funde,
 þat þe forgiue hus senne and wrake,
 and clene of euri gelt us make,
 and eune blis,
 wan hure time is
 to steruen,
 hus giue, for þine sake,
 him so her for to seruen,
 þat þe us to him take.

3

25 Ad hec, uirgo nobilis
 respondens, inquit ei,
 ' Ancilla sum humilis
 28 ' omnipotentis dei,
 ' tibi celesti nuncio
 30 ' tanti secreti conscio,
 ' consentiens
 ' & cupiens
 33 ' uidere
 ' factum quod audio,
 ' parata sum parere
 36 ' dei consilio.'

4

Angelus disparuit,
 & statim puellaris
 uterus intumuit,
 40 ui partus salutaris,
 quo circumdatur utero
 nouem mensium numero ;
 post exiit,
 & iniit
 45 conflictum,
 affigens humero
 cruce[m] qui dedit ictu[m]
 48 soli mortifero.

5

Eya mater domini
 que pacem reddidisti
 Angelis & homini
 52 cum *Christum* genuisti,
 tuum exora filium,
 54 ut se nobis propicium
 exhibeat,
 & deleat
 57 peccata,
 prestans auxilium,
 uita frui beata,
 60 post hoc exilium. AmeN.

¹ 'h' is an overline insertion.² 'and' underdotted and struck through : but see '&' in Latin, st. 4. l. 2.³ The 'n' is a tailed final *n*, like a *y*.

3.

WOODCUTS OF THE
PAINTINGS OF THE 23 TELLERS OF
THE CANTERBURY TALES

COPIED FROM

THE ELLESMERE MS

AND CUT BY

MR W. H. HOOPER.



THE KNYGHT.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 14.

(The brand on the horse's hip—M, ? for *Miles*—
is in ink, and probably by a later hand.)



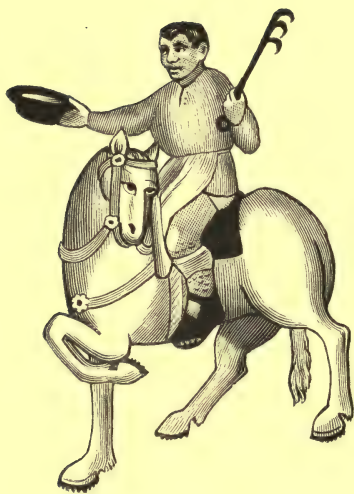
THE MILLERE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 38, back.



THE REVE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 46.



THE COOK.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 51.





THE MAN OF LAWE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 54, back.



THE SHIPMAN.

[*Ellesmere MS, leaf 147, back.*]



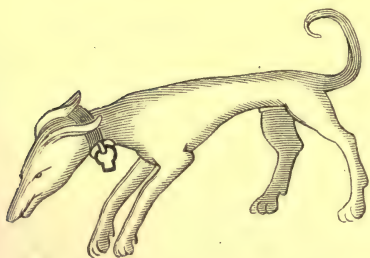
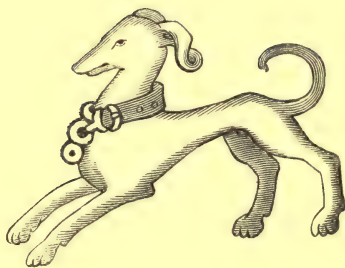
THE PRIORESSE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 152, back.



CHAUCER.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 157, back.



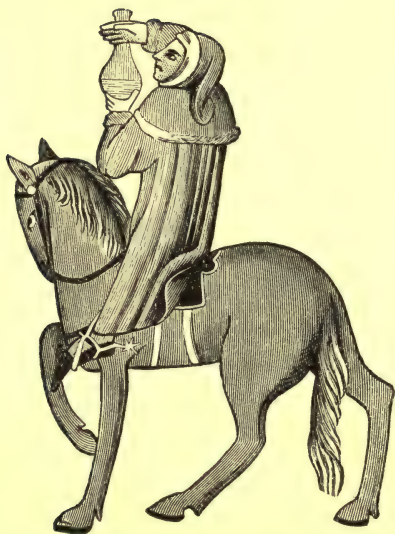
THE MONK.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 173.



THE NONNES PREEST.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 183.



THE DOCTOR.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 137.





THE PARDONER.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 142.





THE WYF OF BATHE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 76.



THE FRERE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 80, back.





THE SOMONOUR.

Elleamere MS, leaf 85, back.



THE CLERK OF OXENFORD.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 92.



THE MERCHANT.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 106, back.



THE SQUIRE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 119, back.



THE SECOND NUN.

Ellemere MS, leaf 191.



THE CANON'S YEOMAN.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 198.



THE MANCIPLE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 207.



THE PARSON.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 210, back.

[These coloured figures in the Ellesmere MS have evidently been drawn by two different persons. The little pieces of ground on which the later hand places his figures, mark those done by him.

His drawing is not so good as the first hand's; and his colours are badly ground, and of poor quality.—W. H. HOOPER.]



THE REEVE.

MS. Gg. 4. 27, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 186.



THE COOK OF LONDON
(with a raw on his Horse's ribs).

MS. Gg. 4. 27, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 192, back.





THE WIFE OF BATH.

MS. Gg. 4. 27, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 222.



THE PARDONER
(with a Jawbone instead of a Sheep's Shoulderbone).

MS. Gg. 4. 27, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 306.



THE MONK

(without his Bells and Hounds).

MS. Gg. 4. 27, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 332.



THE MANCIPLE.

MS. Gg. 4. 27, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 395.



ENVY

(on his Wolf gnawing a Bone).



CHARITY

(with her wingd and flaming Heart).

Parson's Tale.

MS. Gg. 4. 27, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 416.



GLUTTONY AND ABSTINENCE. *Parson's Tale.*

MS. Gg. 4. 27, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 432.



LECHERY (with her Goat and Sparrow), and CHASTITY (trampling on the Dragon of Lust). *Parson's Tale.*

MS. Gg. 4. 27, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 433.

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